



Earthbound Expeditions

Mera Peak Expedition, 6,461 m

18 days, from US\$2,485 per person

Duration

18 days

Start and end

Kathmandu

Accommodation

Lodges and tents

Getting there

Fly to Lukla

Grade

Very strenuous

On the move

4 to 7 hours a day

Meals

All meals on the trek

Max altitude

6,461 m

Best season

Mar to May, Oct to Nov

Group size

Up to 8

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Mera Peak Expedition, 6,461 m Overview

Climb Nepal's highest trekking peak through the quiet Hinku Valley, with a full day of rope and crampon training before you go onto the glacier.

Climb overview

The trip lasts eighteen days. Eleven are spent moving, and four are planned rest days at altitude for acclimatisation. You fly to Lukla, turn south away from the Everest trail, cross the Zatrwa La at 4,610 m into the Hinku Valley, and walk up the valley to Khare at 5,045 m. From Khare it is two days on the glacier to a tented high camp at 5,780 m, followed by one long night that ends on the summit of Mera Central at 6,461 m.

Who this trip is for

This climb suits trekkers who want to take the next step, rather than climbers looking for a difficult route. There is no rock, no mixed ground and no significant exposure. The only steep section is fifty metres of fixed rope below the summit. Mera requires the endurance to walk for two weeks and the patience to acclimatise properly. The technical skills take one day to learn, and we teach them at Khare.

Why the trip takes 18 days

Fifteen-day versions of this climb exist, but we do not offer one. They save time by removing an acclimatisation day, by going directly from Khare to high camp in a single 735 m ascent, and by leaving no spare day for bad weather. Climbers on Mera are rarely turned back by the difficulty of the climb. They are usually turned back because they reached high camp two days too early.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m
2	Permits, gear fitting, briefing	–	–	1,400 m
3	Fly to Lukla, walk to Chutanga	3–4 hrs	4 km	3,050 m
4	Chutanga, acclimatisation day	3–4 hrs	4 km	3,050 m
5	Over Zatrwa La to Thuli Kharka	6–7 hrs	9 km	4,300 m
6	Thuli Kharka to Kothe	5–6 hrs	13 km	3,600 m
7	Kothe to Thaknak	4–5 hrs	8 km	4,358 m
8	Thaknak, acclimatisation day	3–4 hrs	5 km	4,358 m
9	Thaknak to Khare	4–5 hrs	5 km	5,045 m
10	Khare, glacier skills day	4–5 hrs	3 km	5,045 m
11	Khare to Mera Base Camp	3–4 hrs	5 km	5,350 m
12	Base Camp to High Camp	2–3 hrs	2 km	5,780 m
13	Summit Mera Central, down to Khare	9–11 hrs	12 km	6,461 m
14	Spare summit day at Khare	–	–	5,045 m
15	Khare to Kothe	5–6 hrs	13 km	3,600 m

16	Kothe to Thuli Kharka	6–7 hrs	13 km	4,300 m
17	Over Zatrwa La to Lukla	6–7 hrs	13 km	2,840 m
18	Fly to Kathmandu	–	–	1,400 m

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

We meet you at Kathmandu airport and drive you to your hotel. If you are not too tired, you can take an hour to walk through the old streets. In the evening we have dinner together, go through the route day by day, and answer your questions.

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

Day 2

Permits, equipment fitting and briefing

This is a preparation day rather than a sightseeing day. Your photographs and passport go to the Nepal Mountaineering Association office for the climbing permit. We then fit your boots, crampons, harness, ice axe and jumar, so that everything is ready before Khare. The afternoon is free if you would like to visit Boudhanath or Patan.

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

Day 3

Fly to Lukla and trek to Chutanga

The flight lands on Lukla's short, sloping runway, and you start walking within the hour. The trail soon turns south, away from the busy Everest route, and climbs gently through rhododendron and juniper to the few stone huts and tent platforms at Chutanga. The first day is kept short on purpose.

Altitude: 3,050 m On foot: 4 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Lodge, Chutanga Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Acclimatisation day in Chutanga

You sleep at the same altitude for a second night. This is the first of four days in this itinerary without forward progress. In the morning we walk up towards the ridge below the pass to about 3,800 m, look at the next day's route from above, and return for lunch and a free afternoon.

Altitude: 3,050 m On foot: 4 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Lodge, Chutanga Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Trek over the Zatrwa La to Thuli Kharka

This is the hardest day of the approach. A long, steady climb over rock, and often snow, leads to the Zatrwa La at 4,610 m, where the Hinku Valley appears ahead and the Khumbu is left behind. A rough traverse and a descent follow, to the yak pastures at Thuli Kharka. This is your first night above 4,000 m.

Altitude: 4,300 m On foot: 9 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Lodge, Thuli Kharka Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek from Thuli Kharka to Kothe

A long day, mostly downhill, which helps your body recover after the previous night. The path follows the western side of the Hinku Valley through fir and rhododendron, drops steeply to the river, then follows it upstream to Kothe. You sleep 700 m lower than the previous night, which is planned for acclimatisation.

Altitude: 3,600 m On foot: 13 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Lodge, Kothe Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek from Kothe to Thaknak

The trail follows the Hinku Khola, with the south face of Mera ahead for most of the morning. The forest gives way to scrub and then to open ground, and the valley becomes wide, grey and open. Thaknak is a summer grazing settlement with a few lodges that serve mainly climbers.

Altitude: 4,358 m On foot: 8 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Lodge, Thaknak Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Acclimatisation day in Thaknak

This is the second acclimatisation day. We walk up the moraine to Sabai Tsho, the glacial lake below Kusum Kanguru, reach about 4,900 m, and return to sleep at the same place as the night before. The walk takes half a day, is one of the best mornings of the trip, and helps your body adjust to the altitude.

Altitude: 4,358 m On foot: 5 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Lodge, Thaknak Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek from Thaknak to Khare

The distance is short but progress is slow. The trail climbs the moraine beside the Dig Glacier, becomes steeper, and reaches the shelf at Khare, directly below the Mera glacier. You are now at 5,045 m, higher than Everest Base Camp. You spend two nights here now and two more after the summit.

Altitude: 5,045 m On foot: 5 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Lodge, Khare Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Glacier skills training at Khare

A full day on the ice below Khare with your climbing guide. You practise walking in crampons, using the ice axe and harness, climbing a fixed line with a jumar, abseiling, and what to do if the person ahead of you falls into a crevasse. If you have no experience of these skills, this is where you learn them.

Altitude: 5,045 m On foot: 3 km, 4–5 hrs Night: Lodge, Khare Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Climb from Khare to Mera Base Camp

You rope up for the first time. A steep climb from Khare leads onto the glacier, followed by an easier route to the Mera La at 5,415 m and a short descent to the base camp tents on the far side. This takes three to four hours. Tonight you sleep in a tent, and our kitchen crew cooks the food they have carried up.

Altitude: 5,350 m On foot: 5 km, 3–4 hrs Night: Tented camp, Mera Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Climb from Base Camp to Mera High Camp

The climb takes only two to three hours, on snow and roped together, with the Khumbu peaks rising behind you as you gain height. High Camp is on a rock band at 5,780 m, above a long drop, with views of Everest, Lhotse and Makalu across the valley. You eat early, drink plenty of fluids, and try to sleep by seven.

Altitude: 5,780 m On foot: 2 km, 2–3 hrs Night: Tented camp, Mera High Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Summit day and descent to Khare

You leave by two in the morning with head torches and climb slowly up a broad glacier, which is much less steep than it looks from below. The final fifty metres are steep and fixed with rope, and you climb them using a jumar. The summit is a snow dome surrounded by five 8,000 m peaks. You then descend all the way to Khare.

Altitude: 6,461 m at the summit On foot: 12 km, 9–11 hrs Night: Lodge, Khare Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Spare day at Khare

This is a reserve day. If wind or cloud prevented the summit attempt the day before, we climb again today. If not, you rest at Khare, eat well and recover. We include this day in the itinerary rather than offering a shorter trip.

Altitude: 5,045 m On foot: Optional 2–3 hrs Night: Lodge, Khare Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15

Trek from Khare to Kothe

You return the way you came, and the walking is easier. You pass the moraine, Thaknak and the long grey valley, and then reach the first bushes and trees, and thicker air for the first time in over a week. Kothe has a bakery.

Altitude: 3,600 m On foot: 13 km, 5–6 hrs Night: Lodge, Kothe Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16

Trek from Kothe to Thuli Kharka

The trail leaves the river and climbs steadily, 700 metres, up the western side of the valley to the yak pastures where you stayed on the way in. It is a long afternoon, with views of Mera behind you for most of the way.

Altitude: 4,300 m On foot: 13 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Lodge, Thuli Kharka Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 17

Trek over the Zatrwa La to Lukla

You cross the pass for the second time, early in the day, before the cloud rises from the Hinku Valley. You then descend 1,800 m through Chutanga to Lukla. The walk takes seven hours, mostly downhill, and is hard on the knees. At Lukla there is a hot shower and a dining room full of other trekkers and climbers at the end of their trips.

Altitude: 2,840 m On foot: 13 km, 6–7 hrs Night: Lodge, Lukla Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 18

Fly to Kathmandu

Flights from Lukla leave early in the morning or not at all, so you are at the airstrip at first light. You are back at the hotel by mid-morning, or by mid-afternoon if your flight goes via Manthali. We have dinner together in the evening. Book your flight home for tomorrow at the earliest, never for tonight.

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

What's included

- Airport transfers & ground transport
- Kathmandu to Lukla flights, both ways
- Licensed guide and climbing sherpa from Khare
- All permits, park and municipality fees
- Lodges, tented camps and all meals from day 3
- Group climbing gear, ropes and tented high camps

Not included

- International flights
- Travel, climbing & helicopter rescue insurance
- Personal climbing gear, hire available in Kathmandu
- Tips & personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Packing list

Baggage weight limits

Your porter carries a strict maximum of 20 kg, shared between two climbers. The Lukla flight allows 15 kg in total, 10 kg checked and 5 kg hand luggage, and all bags are weighed. Mountaineering boots and crampons use up much of this allowance, which is why we hire equipment in Kathmandu and send it up as freight with the crew. We provide the duffel bag, sleeping bag and down jacket, so you do not need to bring these. Anything else you are not taking on the trek is stored free of charge at our office.

Head and eyes

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Two buffs or neck gaiters, and a balaclava for summit night
- Category 4 glacier glasses. The glare on the Mera glacier is intense by nine in the morning
- Ski goggles for summit night, in case of wind
- Head torch and spare batteries. You leave high camp at two in the morning
- SPF 50 sunscreen and lip balm with sun protection

Clothing

- Four merino or synthetic base layers, not cotton
- Two mid layers: one fleece and one light insulated jacket
- Expedition down jacket. We provide one, but bring your own if you feel the cold at night
- Waterproof jacket and trousers that pack small
- Insulated or softshell climbing trousers for summit day
- Two pairs of trekking trousers, one of them lined

Hands and feet

- Liner gloves, insulated gloves and a pair of expedition mittens
- Worn-in trekking boots with ankle support for the approach
- B2 or B3 mountaineering boots for the glacier. You can hire a pair in Kathmandu if you do not own any
- Five pairs of trekking socks and two thick pairs for summit night
- Camp shoes for the evenings, and gaiters

Climbing equipment

- Crampons that fit your boots. Check the fit in Kathmandu, not at Khare
- Ice axe, walking length rather than technical
- Harness, jumar, belay device and two screwgate karabiners
- Helmet
- Trekking poles, which are more important on the descent than on the climb
- Ropes, ice screws and snow bars are group equipment, and we carry them

Bags

- Duffel bag for the porter, 20 kg maximum. We provide one
- Daypack, 35 to 40 litres, large enough for summit day
- Dry bags or heavy-duty liners. Bags do not stay waterproof for long in the Hinku Valley

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to -20°C. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Inflatable mat if you do not sleep well on foam. The camps provide foam mats
- Earplugs. Lodge walls are plywood, and tents are noisier

Health

- Personal first aid kit: blister plasters, tape, painkillers and rehydration salts
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees, and any medication you take regularly
- Water purification: tablets, a filter or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes. There are no showers above Thaknak
- Throat lozenges. Most people develop a dry cough at altitude

Documents and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for the climbing permit
- Insurance certificate showing climbing and helicopter cover to 6,500 m
- \$400 to \$600 in small notes. There are no ATMs in the Hinku Valley

Route map

Mera Peak Expedition, 6,461 m

18 days | Highest point 6,461 m | Very strenuous



Start: Fly to Lukla, walk to Chutanga

End: Fly back to Kathmandu

Altitude by day



Optional extras

Helicopter from Khare

from \$700 a seat, saves 3 days

Fly from Khare to Lukla or directly to Kathmandu instead of crossing the Zatrwa La again. People usually choose this to save time or to spare their knees.

Add Island Peak

from \$1,250, +7 days

Cross the Amphu Labtsa from the Hinku Valley into the Imja Valley and climb Island Peak while you are still acclimatised. A serious, committing route, and one of the best-value climbs in Nepal.

Lower approach via Paiya

\$340, +3 days

Walk in through Paiya, Pangkoma and Ningsow instead of over the Zatrwa La. It takes three days longer, with several hundred metres less climbing each day, and gives much better acclimatisation.

Everest scenic flight

\$220, 1 morning

A one-hour flight along the range from Kathmandu, with a guaranteed window seat. A useful option if Lukla flights are cancelled for a week.

Guided Kathmandu Valley tour

\$95, 1 day

Bhaktapur, Patan and Boudhanath with a guide who can explain the religious art, on the day after you return from the mountains.

Single room in Kathmandu

\$135

A room to yourself for all three hotel nights. Lodges and tents are twin-share only.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/mera-peak-expedition