Makalu Base Camp 2025

**This is a remote trek to the Base Camp of the world’s fifth highest mountain, Mount Makalu. We see traditional villages, diverse plants and forests and have superb Himalayan views.**

 Makalu Base Camp is a journey to one of the highest mountains in the Himalayas. The area receives few foreign trekkers due to its relative inaccessibility. We trek through the Makalu Barun National Park. This is a wilderness area containing pristine forests and alpine meadows. Along the way, we have incredible views of Makalu and even across to Kangchenjunga, the 3rd highest peak in the world.

This itinerary for Makalu Base Camp via the Shipton La is designed to include plenty of time for acclimatisation to the altitude. We start by flying to Tumlingtar airstrip near the Arun River. After landing at the airstrip in Tumlingtar we drive by jeeps along a rough road to the village of Num. We cross over the Shipton La and into the remote and beautiful Barun river valley. We stay at Makalu Base Camp for two nights and have one full day to explore the area and to enjoy the mountain views afforded to you after the effort to get here.

**Day 1**. Leave the UK.

**Day 2**. Arrive Kathmandu.

**Day 3**. Kit sorting – shopping – sightseeing.

**Day 4**. **FLY TO TUMLINGTAR (285M) AND DRIVE TO NUM (1,500M)**

Fly to Tumlingtar which takes about 45 minutes. then we start the drive in jeeps along a rough road to Num. We pass by the busy market town of Khandbari. We continue the drive, passing through terraced fields. Num is set on a promontory above the Arun River. There are good views over the valley towards Seduwa village.

**Day 5**. **TREK TO SEDUWA (1,540M) 800m descent / 800m ascent, 8km, 5- 6 hours**

Today you have a big, steep descent to the Arun River, which takes around 2 hours, and a big climb to Seduwa, losing and regaining your height in one day. The walk down to the river is through cardamom crops (the largest cash crop in the area), and the path is on big stone steps all the way to the river at 770m. It's very hot, but the scenery is rural Nepal at its best. You cross the suspension bridge over the Arun River and begin the long, winding climb to Seduwa, passing groves of giant bamboo, and bustling village life. This where the Makalu-Baron National Park checkpoint is.

**Day 6**. **TREK TO TASHIGAON (2,070M) 700m ascent, 8km, 5-6 hours.**

It's a lovely day's walk today without the brutal ascents and descents of yesterday. You begin climbing on a path with many stone steps and pass several mani walls as you head into Sherpa country. You walk through many small farms dotted across the hillside, cardamom plantations and bamboo and rhododendron forests. It's certainly a varied, undulating walk today. After approximately two hours you reach the small settlement of Chyaksa Danda at 1,900m. There's a tea shop, a school and several houses here. You may hear barbets, cuckoos, drongos, and laughing thrushes calling through the trees. In some places you are walking through dense forest and have to cross a few streams on bridges. You can see your destination, Tashigaon, on the hillside ahead, although it takes longer than you might think to arrive, as you contour on an undulating path. Eventually you descend to a log bridge just before your final push on stone steps to reach Tashigaon. The lodges are all perched on the top so you have a bit of climbing through the village to earn your dal bhat!

**Day 7**. **TREK TO KHONGMA DANDE (3,560M) 1,400m ascent, 7.2km, 7 hours**

Be prepared for a lot of ascent today! You begin by ascending out of Tashigaon and head up on stone steps. After a while you cross a log bridge and continue ascending through stunning rhododendron forest. It's a steep climb but a lovely walk with a variety of birds to be seen.  After approximately three hours you reach Dhara at 2,867m which has a tea shop, and you are likely to have your lunch here as it's your last chance to have a refreshment stop until you reach Khongma. Leaving Dhara it's a stiff climb of around one hour to Unshisa at 3,200m, where you pass a giant rock. There's a tea hut here and prayer flags marking this pass. From Unshisa it's more relentless climbing on stone steps through rhododendron forest. Eventually after a couple of hours toiling upwards from Unshisha, you reach a stone rest stop with prayer flags, and another 15 minutes - ½ hour - brings you to Khongma Danda at 3,560m. There are three lodges at Khongma, with terraces at the furthest one for us to camp.

**Day 8**. **REST & ACCLIMATISATION DAY AT KHONGMA DANDE (3,560M)**

After an ascent of 1,400m yesterday we take a rest day to help our acclimatisation. This is essential as tomorrow we will cross Shipton La at an altitude of 4,216m. Today we have a morning walk up out of Khongma Danda to a great viewpoint where we see Makalu for the first timeon the trek. After some time sitting here with snacks, the quick walk back down leaves us free to enjoy a relaxing afternoon. This is useful to help the acclimatisation process by following “climb high and sleep low”. There is a superb view from Khongma looking East towards Kanchenjunga.

**Day 9**. **CROSS SHIPTON LA (4,125M) TO DOBATE (3,800M) 852m ascent / 599m descent, 7.6km, 6-8 hours.**

Today is truly spectacular, crossing four high passes with airy traverses and dramatic ridge sections offering near-constant stunning views of snow-capped peaks. There is one lonely tea shop on the Shipton La, breaking up this long, tough day. It takes around one hour of ascent through rhododendron bushes until you reach your first pass of the day - the Khongma La at 3,890m. From there, if it's clear, you'll see Makalu and Chamlang. You descend for a short while before ascending towards your second pass. There are views of Kangchenjunga to be had as you traverse an airy ridge. Some steep stone steps bring you to Sano Pokhari Danda at 4,105m with Sano Pokhari Lake below. To reach here from the Khongma La, takes around an hour. More undulations bring you to the highest pass - the Shipton La at 4,200m. The pass is marked by a mani wall and cairn adorned with prayer flags near the shelter. It's quite a steep pull up to the Shipton La but not difficult.

We descend on less steep ground to Kalo Pokhari Lake at 4,080m. From the lake, it's an easier climb to your last pass of the day - the Keke La at 4,170m. Finally, a further 45 minutes or so of descent brings you to your lodge at Dobate - a very welcome sight after your four pass toils!

**Day 10**. **TREK TO YANGLE KHARKA (3,700M)** **430m ascent / 600m descent, 9.7km, 5-6 hours.**

From Dobate, we descend on a steep trail through blue pine forest. This is almost 500m of descent on steep steps! Turning the corner now with the noise from the Barun River we walk along the steep sides of the Barun Valley and cross several landslide areas. On either side of the valley there are immense rock walls towering overhead. There are views of Peaks 6 and 7. Further along the valley widens and we cross a bridge over to Yangle Kharka. This now meets the Great Himalaya Trail; you are walking a section of it now. We camp in a grassy area next to a basic tea house lodge.

**Day 11.** **TREK TO LANGMALE KHARKA (4,450M) 758m ascent, 10.5km 5 hours.**

Today we pass several yak pastures (kharkas) and herder huts. These have different names and altitudes depending on the map or guidebook. We camp at Langmale Kharka where there is a lodge and terraces cleared for camping. Trees are now left behind, and the landscape is increasingly more barren. As we are now over 4,000m we need to take time for our body to adapt and acclimatise to high altitude. Huge white peaks soar above giving a feast for the eyes. You won’t know where to look!

**Day 12.** **ACCLIMATISATION DAY AT LANGMALE KHARKA (4,450M)**

Today we go for a day walk from Langmale Kharka. This will help our acclimatisation before walking up to Makalu Base Camp tomorrow. We walk up the grassy slopes above the lodge and can ascend 300-800m. Wherever you feel comfortable. There are superb views of the Himalayan mountains throughout the day so take your time to enjoy the walk. The views of Peak 3, 4, and 5 are stunning as well as Chamlang. Relax for the afternoon.

**Day 13**. **TREK TO MAKALU BASE CAMP (4,780M) 473m ascent / 115m descent, 8.7km, 5-6 hours.**

A truly sublime day on the trail today; Peak 7 is an almost constant companion whilst Peak 6 sits directly ahead, looking quite Ama-Dablam-esque. You begin ascending on a good path - the going feels tough at this altitude so we will take it very easy. You'll be keeping the river on your left as you snake your way around the valley. As you round each bend, you'll have another dramatic aspect to marvel at. In parts you'll be hopping from boulder to boulder, but mostly you're on a reasonable, sandy trail. 400m of height to your destination is not so bad, but the trail undulates gently and there are only a few steeper sections to get you puffing.

Peak 4 comes into view as you progress. After a couple of hours walking, you reach a wide, flat area with a small tea house- this is called Shershong, at 4,630m. A refreshment stop here is on the cards. Eventually Makalu comes tantilisingly into view. Its formidable face with its icefalls, crevasses, jagged edges and seracs makes you gaze up in awe. As you round a few bends, you wonder when the base camp will reveal itself. Eventually you will see the lodges.You descend, cross the river, and in five minutes you arrive at your long-awaited destination. Makalu completely dominates the view.

**Day 14**. **DAY WALK NEAR MAKALU BASE CAMP (4,780M)**

Today we arrange a walk on the slopes towards the East side of Makalu Base Camp. Higher up above camp there are views of Mount Everest, Lhotse and of course Makalu. The walk will take about 5 hours return and reaches an altitude of 5,300m. Or alternatively stay and marvel at the mountain towering above, by far one of the best base camp views of a high peak.

**Day 15**. **TREK TO YANGLE KHARKA (3,700M) 122m ascent / 1,214m descent, 16km, 6-7 hours.**

It's with a heavy heart that you leave behind the overwhelming spectacle that is Mount Makalu, and begin re-tracing your steps to Yangle Kharka. It takes around 1½ hours to reach the meadow of Shershong, marked with a hut with bright orange tarpaulin. A further hour or so brings you back to Langmale, where you may have tea and possibly lunch. About 1¼ hours walking downhill brings you next to the tea shop at Merek. It's good to chill here with a cup of chai before weaving your way through pine forests back to Yangle Kharka. It takes approximately 2-2½ hours to reach here from the tea shop at Merek.

Day 16. **TREK TO DOBATE (3,800M) 640m ascent / 412m descent, 9.3km, 6 hours.**

We follow the same trail back to Dobate…. Which means back up all those steps…. The way back is not easier by any means!

**Day 17. CROSS SHIPTON LA (4,125M) AND TREK TO KONGMA. 600m ascent / 852m descent, 7.6km, 6-7 hours.**

Today is your last chance to get captivating views of the high mountains, including Kangchenjunga. You begin ascending to the Keke La at 4,170m, which should take around 1½ hours. It's a further 1½ hours to reach your highest point today - the Shipton La at 4,200m. Enjoy your stop here at the tea house. Another hour or so of contouring round the mountainside will bring you to the large cairn that marks Sano Pokhari Danda at 4,105m. A further hour of undulations brings you back to the final pass - the Khongma La at 3,890m, marked by a mani wall. Approximately 250m of descent, mainly on stone steps, brings you back to your lodge at Khongma.

**Day 18**. **TREK TO TASHIGAON 80m ascent / 1,450m descent, 6.4km, 5 hours.**

We descend on the same trail from Khongma down to Tashigaon. The views that were behind are now a feast for the eyes with beautiful colours of cultivated hillsides now ahead.

**Day 19.  Return to Seduwa - 150m ascent / 700m descent, 8.9km, 4-5 hours.**

Retracing our steps back to Seduwa today will take around 4-5 hours.

**Day 20.** Today we walk for about 2 1/2 hours then take jeeps along a rough road to the busy market town of Khandbari. We may stay here for the night, before our flight back depending on weather and flights.

**Day 21.** Today we fly back to Kathmandu for hotels, proper toilets, showers and delicious food.

**Day 22.** Spare contingency day for weather or flights. Sightseeing in Kathmandu.

**Day 23.** Fly back to the UK.

There are 15 trekking days on this trip. Flight arrival times will dictate which day we leave Kathmandu for Tumlingtar.

Included on this trip;

* Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu on B&B basis
* Full board on trek either tea houses or camping – tents and sleeping mats provided
* Use of teahouse facilities
* Transfers in Nepal – internal flights, buses, jeeps
* One sightseeing day in Kathmandu either before or after the trek
* Snacks during the trek
* Fully qualified guides
* Porters transporting your personal belongings
* Team of porters carrying cooking equipment and tents
* Comprehensive first aid kit on trek
* Trekking and national park fees
* Internal flights and transfers by jeep
* All costs for sherpas and porters
* Kit bag for the trek
* Satellite communication (likely Garmin in-reach)

Not included

* International flights
* Visa fees
* Bar bills and any laundry
* Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu
* Travel insurance
* Tips
* Costs incurred from leaving the trip early

Trip Cost £2895pp

Deposit - £350