

**49**  
DAYS

# MAKALU EXPEDITION

Summit the 5th highest mountain in the world



**DATES**  
April - May 2016

**HIMALAYAN  
ASCENT** 



## COST

Contact us for detail (joining Expedition from Kathmandu, full service with maximum oxygen, high Sherpa guide to client ratio)

## GRADE/FITNESS

This expedition requires excellent fitness and prior experience of a Himalayan expedition. You should be able to carry at least 20kg, demonstrate strong endurance and high mountaineering experience. The NW ridge is the standard route that involves steep climbs on an ice cliff and rock band. The summit pyramid is particularly technical. The maximum altitude is 8463m.

## INCLUDES:

5 nights Kathmandu accommodation, airport transfer to hotel and welcome dinner, all necessary climbing and trekking permits, experienced expedition leader and base camp manager, government liaison officer, all meals and accommodation during trek to base camp, unlimited weight allowance of personal gear to base camp,

fully serviced powered base camp (including personal tent, heated dining tent, full satellite communication system (pay per use), all meals/snacks and hot showers), ICOM 2-way radio system for all guides to communicate between camps, team of Sherpa climbing guides to set up and stock all higher camps, Sherpa guides to carry personal gear to higher camps, all meals and tents above base camp, minimum 1:1 Sherpa climbing guide on summit day, maximum oxygen allowance with the TopOut delivery system (allows multiple summit attempts), extensive high altitude wilderness first aid kit, porters to carry group equipment, all group climbing equipment, all other charges for route fixing including icefall and expedition duffels.

## EXCLUDES:

international flights to Kathmandu, tips and summit bonuses for Sherpa guides, Nepal tourist visa, meals in Kathmandu (USD 10-15 per meal), aerated and alcoholic beverages, personal items (e.g. phone calls, laundry), travel insurance (including early departure, mountain search and rescue) and personal climbing gear.







## OVERVIEW

Makalu or “Big Black” is situated just 19km South East from Everest in the Makalu-Barun National Park bordering Tibet. This 5th highest mountain in the world was first climbed in 1955, however, few expeditions today climb this mountain due to its tough technical demands on the summit pyramid. The Makalu-Barun National Park is a remote wilderness with few comfort services available compared to neighbouring Sagarmatha National Park. Hence, this expedition has additional challenges and difficulties; attempting Makalu is a considerable undertaking amongst 8000m peaks.

The route begins with a flight into Tumlingtar (285m), a town at the base of the hills that climb into Makalu-Barun National park. We will then drive to our trailhead in Chichila. The journey from this point is a 9-day route on foot through villages and subtropical forests, descents and ascents of the Arun valley, and hikes over a series of passes including Shipton La pass (4200m) to finally reach Makalu base camp.

We will take a few days to rest and acclimatise at base camp before starting our rotation rounds on the mountain. Using the route of the first ascent, we will ascend via the north-west ridge. From Makalu base camp, we will place 5 camps on the mountain beginning with an advanced base camp located just across the glacier moraine. The route between Camp 1 to Camp 3 climbs between seracs and crevasses with sections of steep mixed climbing. Camp 4 to the summit is a significant day that involves negotiating a steep ice band, crevasses, a 300m gully and an exposed summit ridge.

Given the gravity and difficulty of this expedition, you must have extensive climbing skills and a considerable level of experience in the Himalayas to join this expedition, preferably with experience of an 8000m expedition.





## HIGHLIGHTS

- Summit the 5th highest mountain in the world
- Varied subtropical to high altitude trek
- Traditional Rai and Sherpa villages
- Close views of Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse
- Close

## EXPEDITION BREAKDOWN

### Trek (9 days)

From Kathmandu it's a short flight to Tumlingtar and drive to Chichila, our trailhead. Our trek through the Makalu-Barun national park begins in a dense subtropical forest. We descend and ascend the Arun valley, pass through Rai villages, and then finally trek over a series of high passes to enter the high altitude lands of Sherpas.

### Base camp (approx. 3 weeks)

We will first acclimatise at a lower BC before moving to our higher Advanced BC (ABC) located on the glacier moraine.

ABC is a comfortable and well-equipped home for the next few weeks. Each climber will have their own 3-person dome tent. We will gather in our warm triple-skin heated and comfortable dining room for meals. Pay-per-use internet facilities will be available. It has become a climbing tradition in the Himalayas for all groups to conduct a small Buddhist ceremony (puja) to offer thanks to the mountain, and to ask it for safe passage through its environment. We will conduct this ceremony at base camp. As we get ready, we will alternately rest and climb, giving ourselves the preparation necessary for the best chance of success.

### Climb (approx. 3 weeks spent above advanced base camp)

After we settle in at ABC, we will proceed with checking and testing all of our climbing equipment before our first rotation through the higher camps. Our rotations will include spending nights progressively higher on the mountain as we climb and familiarise ourselves with the route. Meanwhile, our Sherpas will set up and stock higher camps (C1-C4) with essential supplies needed for the next month of climbing.

Once we are well-acclimatised and our camps are set, we will take some extra time to rest up at ABC, before going for the summit!





## ITINERARY

### Day 1 Arrive in Kathmandu

A Himalayan Ascent representative will collect you from the airport. It's a free day to recover from your international flight, and to meet your guides and team. Later in the evening, there will be a group briefing and welcome group dinner.

### Day 2-3 In Kathmandu

These are spare days for you prepare and check through equipment with your guides. There will be time to rent or buy anything else if needed. Meanwhile, any extra time you can sight see some of the many World Heritage sites Kathmandu has to offer.

### Day 4 Fly to Tumlingtar, drive to Chichila (1840m)

We'll take a 45 min flight to the flat plains of Tumlingtar, a small town that sits at the base of the hills of Makalu-Barun national park. After loading jeeps, it's a 2-3 hr bumpy road journey to our trailhead at Chichila.

### Day 5 Trek Chichila (1840m) to Num (1500m) ~5 hrs

Time to stretch our legs! We will trek up the ridge above Chichila through a rhododendron and bamboo forest. In spring, the rhododendrons will be in full bloom in various

colours! On clear days, we'll be able to sight our objective, Makalu in the north-west. We descend to the village of Num that sits high above the Arun river.

### Day 6 Trek Num (1500m) to Seduwa (1530m) ~5 hrs

Across the valley we can spot our next stop at Seduwa, which means today is a full day of descending down to the Arun river (650m), and then trudging back up! We pass through farming villages and terraced fields, and the hot jungle by the river. After crossing a suspension bridge, it's a steep climb to Seduwa. This village is the main entry point into the Makalu-Barun national park.







### **Day 7 Trek Seduwa (1540m) to Tashigaon (2070m) ~4 hrs**

We now continue heading north-west towards Makalu, trekking through fields and Sherpa villages. Tashigaon is the main Sherpa settlement in this area, and it is also the last permanent settlement. Beyond here, it is remote wilderness.

### **Day 8 Trek Tashigaon (2070m) to Khongma (3560m) ~6 hrs**

It's a continuous and steady climb to Khongma. Due to the large height gain, remember to walk slow to allow your body time to acclimatise. The trail wanders through dense forest and then opens to some huts at Chipla as it contours around ridges. As we progress higher, the environment becomes more high alpine with scrubs.

### **Day 9 Acclimatisation in Khongma**

It is critical to the success of an expedition like this to let our bodies gradually acclimatise to the altitude, particularly as we've covered a significant height gain the previous day. This will be the first of several rest and acclimatisation days we will take along the way to foster this process. The next day we cross Shipton La pass so we will take a short day hike higher along the ridge and later rest in preparation.

### **Day 10 Trek Khongma (3560m) to Mumbak (3550m) via Shipton La pass (4125m) ~6 hrs**

Continuing up the Barun valley alongside the Barun river, we can enjoy views of Peak 6 (6524m) and Peak 7 (6758m) just west of the trail. Our stop for the night is in a lovely meadow at the foot of the valley head.

### **Day 10 Trek Mumbak (3550m) to Yangle Kharka (3700m) ~ 5 hrs**

Continuing up the Barun valley alongside the Barun river, we can enjoy views of Peak 6 (6524m) and Peak 7 (6758m) just west of the trail. Our stop for the night is in a lovely meadow at the foot of the valley head.

### **Day 11 Trek Yangle Kharka (3700m) to Shershong (4650m) to ~ 4 hrs**

The route now heads up into the valley towards the Barun glacier passing a few yak herder settlements. We stop for the night in a cleared yak pasture located a stone's throw from Tibet. Surrounded by Peak 6, Chonku Chuli (6830m) and Peak 3 (6108m), you know Makalu is now just around the corner!

### **Day 12 Acclimatisation in Shershong**

We'll spend an extra day at Shershong before moving to base camp. This will improve our acclimatisation and will provide extra time as our team establish camps ahead.





### **Day 13 Trek Shershong (4650m) to Makalu base camp (4800m) ~ 4 hrs**

As we approach base camp along a rocky terrain, the south face and unclimbed south-east ridge of Makalu will be clearly visible. Our base camp is placed near the foot of the Barun glacier.

### **Day 14-15 Acclimatisation and puja at base camp**

Before pushing to our true base at advanced base camp, we'll spend another day acclimatising. There's another large height gain required to reach ABC and we need everyone to be feeling prepared, and physically adapted to the high altitude. Our Sherpa guides have a strong spiritual relationship with the mountains, so in respect and to honour Makalu, we will perform a puja to wish us success and safety.

### **Day 16 Climb base camp (4800m) to Advanced BC (5700m) ~ 7hrs**

We'll climb up onto and along the Barun glacier, passing the West face of Makalu. ABC is a rocky camp located on the north ridge just off the west pillar of Makalu. It's a steep trek up the glacier moraine to reach it. This will now be our home away from home during the expedition.

### **Day 17 Acclimatisation at ABC**

We'll settle into our home and rest to allow our bodies to acclimatise.

This is also a time for conducting final gear checks and inspecting equipment. Our Sherpas guides will be establishing camps higher on the mountain in preparation for our climb rotations.

### **Day 18-35 Rotations to Camp 1 (6340m), Camp 2 (6670m) and Camp 3 (7400m)**

We begin our first forays on the mountain with a series of climbs: half way to Camp 1, to Camp 1 overnight, to Camp 1 overnight and touch Camp 2, and eventually to Camp 2 overnight and touch Camp 3. Between climbs we will return to base camp and rest to continue improving our acclimatisation physiology. The route between ABC and Camp 1 (6350m) meanders around crevasses and a 150m ice wall of Chago glacier. The camp is situated on a plateau on the glacier. The journey to Camp 2 (6670m) is a short distance from Camp 1, further along the glacier that requires careful climbing between crevasses. The next section of the route is more technical up to Makalu La and Camp 3 (7400m). It begins gradually up the glacier until a steep rock band that is icy and snow covered for 300m. We then cross a snow field that is avalanche prone before reaching another section of rock and ice. Finally once on the Makalu La, we'll climb to a less exposed site on the glacier. The rotation to Camp 3 is very weather dependent; it shouldn't be attempted when strong winds are gusting across the pass.



### Day 36-37 Rest in ABC

It is important to rest at a lower altitude before our final push to Camp 4 and the summit. This allows your muscles to recover with higher oxygen levels and improved nutrition from the camp kitchen. Also relax your mind, climbing a mountain is both a physical and mental challenge. Take this time to reset your mind to prepare you for the mental challenges ahead above 8000m.

### Day 38-44 Climb to Camp 4 (7600m) and Summit Makalu

Finally when conditions are right, we will progress back up the mountain, sleeping at Camp 1 and 2. Alternatively, depending on everyone's fitness and acclimatisation, we may directly head to Camp 2 and bypass Camp 1. Camp 4 (7600m) is located across a snow field and in a serac band, a short distance from Camp 4. The next day, it's an alpine midnight start for the summit. Given the harsh conditions of Camp 3 and 4, we aim to spend a minimal amount of time above Camp 2. The route from Camp 4 to the summit is the most technically demanding of the entire route, added to the fact that you're highing into 8000m+ thin air. We begin traversing an ice band and then climb a snow ramp to a plateau. We carefully cross the plateau avoiding crevasses to the French couloir of 300m height. Climbing the couloir is not too steep and is a mix of rock and snow. You will top out onto the summit ridge, that is an icy exposed plateau with summit towers we will carefully climb around to reach the summit! We will descend to Camp 3 if possible. Remember getting off a mountain is just as technical as climbing up. Dropping below Camp 3 requires very careful climbing after the summit push. We will celebrate with a warm bed and hearty meal at ABC. You have summited the 5th highest mountain! Makalu, a true mountain of mountains.

## OTHER OPTIONS

### OPTIONAL LIMITED SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- Advanced Base camp only service (no climbing Sherpas or serviced higher camps)
- Full service with limited oxygen
- No personal Sherpa guide on summit day
- Trekking to Makalu base camp

Contact us for cost details for these options.

### Day 45-46 Pack up ABC and trek to BC

With the summit complete, we pack up ABC and prepare for the journey home. We trek back across the glacier to base camp.

### Day 47 Helicopter to Kathmandu

After climbing an 8000m mountain, the thought of trekking back through the hot Arun valley jungle is probably not an attractive option. Instead we will helicopter back to Kathmandu to refreshing showers and celebratory beer!

### Day 48 In Kathmandu

A full day to rest and recover from your expedition! You deserve it. Remember to eat and drink well during this time to nourish your body properly after what it has endured at high altitude above 8000m!

### Day 49 Depart Kathmandu

Time to depart crazy Kathmandu to friends and family at home. We'll see you on your next







# WHY HIMALAYAN ASCENT?

Himalayan Ascent is owned and managed by local Nepalese guides, Sumit Joshi and Lakpa Sherpa. With more than 40 years of guiding experience between the pair across the Himalayas in Nepal, Tibet, India, Pakistan and Bhutan, Himalayan Ascent know the Himalayas, its challenges, people and mountains.

As avid rock climbers with a passion for the mountains, Sumit and Lakpa have led numerous expeditions to Everest, K2, Broad Peak, Cho Oyu, Manaslu and Ama Dablam. Raised in the outdoor wonderland of the Solukhumbu, the Himalayan Ascent difference is a guiding and support team of personnel who are intimately familiar with the Himalayas, who actively enjoy the outdoors and love sharing the experience with others. With a growing reputation for providing affordable, international standard complete guiding service for challenging treks in remote areas or demanding 8000m expeditions, Himalayan Ascent has the experience to deliver the type of service that's desired by international outdoor adventurers.





# Why himalayan ascent to Makalu?

Himalayan Ascent runs small sized expeditions on Makalu. You'll get to know your Sherpa guides and team mates personally. Building a good rapport with your team is critical for summit success. Our Sherpa guides are formally trained through the Nepal Mountain Guides Association and some are internationally accredited. We have a reputation for having the best managed and most comfortable base camp, and a camp cook known for making the best pizzas. Want to speak to our past clients? Contact us for the contact details of our previous Cho Oyu clients.



## OTHER INFORMATION

### Sleep and food

Due to the limited infrastructure available in the region, you'll be camping on the trek to base camp. Our base camp cook will make a variety of nutritious meals to power you during the expedition.

You'll end up spending a fair bit of time in base camp as you rest in between acclimatisation trips and wait for a suitable summit window. We provide a comfortable, healthy environment at base camp so that you can focus on getting prepared for your summit push.

Your Kathmandu accommodation is a mid-range 3.5 star hotel, but we can adjust according to your budget (i.e. budget to 5-star). Note that meals in Kathmandu are not included in the cost. Plan for USD 10-15 per meal on these days.

### Visas

Nepalese tourist visas can be obtained directly at the immigration department of Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. Bring at least 2 passport sized photos, a copy of your passport and USD 100 cash for a 90-day tourist visa. You can also prearrange a visa from your nearest Nepalese consulate.

### Climate

During the journey to base camp, the weather will be dry and warm, reaching -25oC in the day and 0oC at night. In base camp (above 5000m), day temperatures can range 10oC-15oC. Nights are cool and can drop to -10oC. Above 7000m, temperatures will range from -40oC to -10oC at night.

### Staying Healthy

It's vitally important to protect your health on a Makalu expedition, and Himalayan Ascent Director, Sumit Joshi, is an experienced high-altitude medical provider who has trained under legendary high-altitude practitioner, Dr. Jim Duff. Sumit's knowledge is an invaluable resource, especially higher up on the mountain, without such easy access to base camp ER facilities.

Our staff are also well-trained in all aspects of hygiene, to ensure that you don't come down with a stomach bug the day before you leave base camp for the summit. Having a smaller team also assists in this regard.

### Experienced sherpa guides

Our Sherpa guides are passionate climbers who live and breathe their sport – i.e. they are not farmers who moonlight as climbers during climbing season. Our entire team have graduated from the Khumbu Climbing School, and train new guides during its winter session. One of them, Jangbu Sherpa, is now a fully-qualified UIAGM guide.

### Small cohesive team

Makalu is a big mountain. Himalayan Ascent runs small expeditions with a supporting number of Sherpa guides. By having a small team of climbers, we are able to move more efficiently on the mountain, and we have the capacity to allow input from team members regarding decision making.





## Equipment list

Familiarity and comfort using your personal equipment is paramount to summit success. We recommend that you test drive your equipment before joining this expedition, ideally on another 8000m expedition. Keeping feet and hands warm in reliable gear during storms above 8000m will make or break your Makalu dreams. This is a list of recommended items you should bring with you. Please email us about specific brands or models we know works well on 8000m peaks.

There are a number of branded mountaineering equipment stores now open in Kathmandu. To save some check-in luggage allowance, contact us about what's available locally for purchase.

### Head:

- Baseball cap
- Balaclava (comfortable tight-fitting, which covers as much skin as possible)
- Warm polar fleece or wool hat (beanie)
- Glacier glasses (category 4 lens, must wrap around your face well)
- Ski goggles (snug fit with good ventilation and anti-fog)
- Headlamp X 2 (bright LED with powerful beam) and plenty of extra batteries
- Climbing helmet (adjustable, climbing-specific)

### Hands:

- Gloves (snug fitting wind stopper, and a few pairs of thin liners)
- Big Mountain gloves (Gore-Tex with removable liner, warmest available)
- Big Mountain mittens (warm and should fit over your wind stopper gloves, must be able to operate a Jumar wearing them)

### Feet:

- Liner socks (4 pairs)
- Hiking socks (4 pairs)
- Warm mountain socks (4 pairs)
- Down booties
- Base camp shoes (comfortable, waterproof and warm)
- Hiking shoes (good low to mid-cut, Gore-Tex lined)
- Light-weight mountaineering boots (e.g. leather mountaineering boot for acclimatisation climbs up to Camp 2)
- 8000m mountaineering boots (integrated gaiter, double boot with warm insulation)

### Upper Body:

- Base layers (breathable and moisture wicking, few different weights, e.g. silk weight, mid-weight and expedition weight)
- Warm jacket (fleece or polarguard)
- Softshell jacket (with wind stopping properties)
- Gore-Tex jacket (breathable waterproof with good hood that fits over a climbing helmet)
- Synthetic fill Jacket (e.g. primaloft)
- Down suit (comfortable fit 8000m down suit made by a well known brand)
- Down jacket (800 fill, lightweight with hood)

### Legs:

- Base layer (breathable and moisture wicking, mid-weight and expedition weight)
- Soft shell pants (comfortable for everyday wear)
- Gore-Tex pants (heavy duty with reinforced crampon patches and waterproof zippers)
- Insulated pants (down or primaloft)
- Shorts (quick dry)



## Equipment

- Small day pack for trekking and city use (comfortable, 15-20L)
- Backpack (50-70L, fitted for your back length and internal frame)
- Duffel bags to transport your gear to Nepal
- Sleeping pads (full length, insulated inflatable and closed cell foam pads with repair kit)
- Sleeping bag X 2, -20oC to -40oC rated (800+ goose down fill, correct length for your height, one for base camp and one for higher camp)
- Harness (light weight alpine with belay loop and gear loop)
- Carabineers (4 screw gate and 4 snap gate)
- Belay device (easy to use and lightweight)
- Prussik cord (about 8 meters of 6mm and 5 meters of 4mm)
- Ice Axe (for alpine use and right length for your height)
- Crampons (semi auto with heel bail, good anti-balling system and steel)
- Jumar (large handle to fit your gloved hand)
- Trekking poles (lightweight with good snow basket)

Plus: normal city clothes, trekking clothes, small personal first aid kit, water bottles, pee bottles, pocket knife, cigarette lighter, pad locks for the duffel, scarf (bandana and buffs), underwear (avoid cotton), Ziplock bags, garbage bags to use as waterproof liner, different size stuff sacks, sunscreen (heavy duty), lip balm, toiletries, snacks to last two months and entertainment items (e.g. music, books, camera, phone with solar power charging system).

Travel documents: passport, visa (90 days), passport photos, copy of your travel insurance and photocopies of passport.



# **HIMALAYAN ASCENT**



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