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Kanchenjunga Circuit Trek

Deep Into Untouched Kanchenjunga Wilderness

Duration: 17 Days

Max Altitude: 4,785 m (Kanchenjunga North Base Camp)

Trek Grade: Moderate to Strenuous and Remote

Start / End: Kathmandu

Accommodation: Hotel in Kathmandu & Teahouses along the trek

Best Season: March–May | September–November

Group Type: Private or Group Joining



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Overview

The **Kanchenjunga Circuit Trek** is one of Nepal's most remote and adventurous high-altitude journeys, combining both the **North and South Base Camps of Mt. Kanchenjunga (8,586 m)**. This expedition-style trek takes you deep into the **untouched wilderness of eastern Nepal**, inside the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area, where trails are quiet, landscapes are pristine, and the mountain views are powerful and unspoiled.

The trek starts with a flight to Bhadrapur and a scenic drive through the lush tea gardens of Ilam. From Taplejung, the trail leads through dense rhododendron and bamboo forests, traditional Limbu and Tibetan villages, and high alpine valleys. With gradual acclimatization, trekkers move higher into the glacier world, crossing multiple high passes before reaching the North Base Camp (Pangpema) and later the South Base Camp. The entire circuit offers a rare opportunity to experience the **true wilderness of Kanchenjunga**, away from crowds, with raw nature and authentic mountain culture.

Trip Highlights

- The trek covers both Kanchenjunga North and South Base Camps in one complete circuit.
- It takes you deep into the remote wilderness of the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area.
- You will cross multiple high passes, including Sele La, Sinion La, and Mirgin La.
- The route offers close-up and dramatic views of Mt. Kanchenjunga and surrounding peaks.
- The trek provides a true off-the-beaten-path experience with minimal crowds.

Itinerary

Day 1: Kathmandu → Bhadrapur (Flight) → Fikkal/Kanyam (1,500 m)

(Morning flight to Bhadrapur followed by a scenic drive through Ilam's tea gardens; short evening walk and overnight at lodge.)

Day 2: Fikkal/Kanyam → Taplejung (1,820 m)

(Drive through rolling hills, cardamom farms, and traditional villages; arrive in Taplejung for trek briefing and final preparations.)



Day 3: Taplejung → Sekathum (1,650 m)

(Drive via Mitlung and Tapethok along the Tamor River; enter the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area and reach Sekathum.)

Day 4: Sekathum → Amjilosa (2,510 m)

(Trek along narrow trails through lush forests, crossing suspension bridges and steep sections to Amjilosa.)

Day 5: Amjilosa → Gyabla (2,730 m)

(Trek through bamboo and rhododendron forests with moderate ascents; reach the quiet village of Gyabla.)

Day 6: Gyabla → Ghunsa (3,595 m)

(Ascend through pine and juniper forests with waterfalls and yak pastures; arrive at the Tibetan-influenced village of Ghunsa.)

Day 7: Acclimatization at Ghunsa (3,595 m)

(Rest and acclimatization with short hikes to nearby ridges or monasteries; explore Ghunsa and prepare for higher altitude.)

Day 8: Ghunsa → Kambachen (4,100 m)

(Trek along the Ghunsa Khola through alpine terrain; enjoy spectacular views of Mt. Jannu (Kumbhakarna).

Day 9: Acclimatization at Kambachen (4,100 m)

(Acclimatization hike to nearby viewpoints or glacier areas; rest, hydrate, and monitor altitude conditions.)

Day 10: Kambachen → Lhonak (4,785 m)

(Trek across rocky moraines and wide glacial valleys; reach the remote settlement of Lhonak.)

Day 11: Lhonak → Kanchenjunga North Base Camp → Lhonak (4,785 m)

(Early morning hike to Pangpema (North Base Camp) with breathtaking views of Kanchenjunga's north face; return to Lhonak.)

Day 12: Lhonak → Ghunsa (3,595 m)

(Descend along the same route, enjoying easier walking and changing scenery; overnight at Ghunsa.)



Day 13: Ghunsa → Sele Le (4,390 m)

(Challenging ascent through high alpine terrain and mountain passes; enjoy dramatic views before reaching Sele Le camp.)

Day 14: Sele Le → Cheram (3,870 m)

(Cross high passes including Sele La, Sinion La, and Mirgin La; descend to the alpine settlement of Cheram.)

Day 15: Cheram → Kanchenjunga South Base Camp → Ramche (4,580 m)

(Hike to South Base Camp with stunning views of Yalung Glacier and Mt. Kanchenjunga; descend to Ramche.)

Day 16: Ramche → Torongding (2,080 m)

(Long descent through alpine meadows, forests, and river valleys; reach the lower settlement of Torongding.)

Day 17: Torongding → Rani Pul (1,430 m)

(Trek through villages and cultivated land with warmer climate; arrive at Rani Pul.)

Day 18: Rani Pul → Taplejung (1,820 m)

(Drive back to Taplejung through remote hill roads; rest and celebrate completion of the circuit trek.)

Day 19: Bhadrapur → Kathmandu (Flight) (1,300 m)

(Drive to Bhadrapur Airport and fly back to Kathmandu; transfer to hotel and end of trek.)

All You Need to Know

1. Visa Process

Nepal's tourist visa fees vary by duration, with common options on arrival being \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, and \$125 for 90 days, plus \$3/day for extensions.

2. Guide In Nepal

You will need a guide for tour, trekking, peak climbing as well as expedition.

- Tour Guide: A professional who leads sightseeing tours and provides local information.
- Driver Guide: A driver who also acts as a guide during travel.
- Trekking Guide: An experienced guide who leads trekking routes safely.



- Peak Climbing Guide: A trained guide for high-altitude mountain climbing.
- Expedition Sherpa Guide: A skilled Sherpa who supports and guides challenging expeditions.
- Porter: A helper who carries luggage or trekking gear, sometimes also assisting as a guide.

3. Accommodation

Stay comfortably with options to suit every traveler from budget backpacker stays (USD \$10) to 5★ city hotels (USD \$90) to cozy teahouses with attached bathrooms and camps along the trekking trails.

4. Transportation

Choose from local buses, private cars, shared or private jeeps, domestic flights, and helicopter transfers for convenient travel across Nepal.

5. Permits and entrance fees

Trekking and visiting protected areas in Nepal require permits and entrance fees to support conservation and local communities. Key permits and fees include:

- TIMS (Trekking Information Management System) Card: Required for most trekking regions.
- ACAP Permit (Annapurna Conservation Area Permit): Needed for trekking in Annapurna region.
- KCA Permit (Kanchenjunga Conservation Area Permit): Required for Kanchenjunga treks.
- SAC Permit (Sagarmatha National Park Entry Permit): Needed for Everest region treks.
- Langtang National Park Entry Permit: Required for treks in Langtang region.
- Manaslu Conservation Area Permit (MCAP): Needed for Manaslu trekking.
- Royal Chitwan National Park Entry Fee: For visiting Chitwan National Park.
- Bardia National Park Entry Fee: For wildlife safaris in Bardia.

Fees vary by nationality and trekking region.

6. Meals

During your trek, meals are usually served in teahouses or lodges, with options for local Nepali cuisine, vegetarian, and international dishes. Breakfast is usually included in accommodation. In the city, you can enjoy a wide variety of restaurants, cafes, and hotel dining.

7. Health & Safety



- Altitude sickness awareness and proper acclimatization are crucial when trekking above 2,500m.
- Carry basic medications and a personal first-aid kit.
- Drink bottled or purified water only.
- Vaccinations (such as Hepatitis A, Typhoid, and Tetanus) are recommended before travel.
- Emergency rescue services are available in major trekking regions.

8. Currency & Payments

- Nepalese Rupee (NPR) is the local currency.
- ATMs are available in major cities but limited in remote areas. Credit cards are accepted in hotels, restaurants, and shops in cities.
- Cash is essential for trekking regions.

9. Communication & Internet

Local SIM cards (Ncell or Nepal Telecom) are easily available at the airport and in cities.

Mobile network coverage is good in cities and popular trekking routes.

Wi-Fi is available in hotels and teahouses, sometimes at an extra cost in remote areas.

10. Cultural Etiquette & Local Customs

Dress modestly, especially in rural areas and religious sites.

Remove shoes before entering temples and homes.

Respect local traditions and festivals.

Ask permission before taking photos of people.

11. Responsible & Sustainable Travel

Avoid single-use plastics and use refillable bottles.

Respect wildlife and natural environments.

Support local communities by using local guides, porters, and accommodations.

Follow “Leave No Trace” principles during treks.

Important Information

- This trek requires a good level of physical fitness, as it involves long walking days, uneven terrain, and gradual ascent at higher altitudes. Participants are strongly



advised to prepare in advance through regular exercise, endurance training, and hiking practice.

- Altitude-related illnesses such as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) can occur above 2,500 m. All itineraries are designed with proper acclimatization days to minimize risk; however, individuals must follow the guide's instructions and report any symptoms immediately. If symptoms worsen, descending to a lower altitude is mandatory for safety.
- Weather conditions in the Himalayas are unpredictable and can change rapidly, particularly during monsoon and winter seasons. Trekking schedules may be adjusted due to weather, trail conditions, or safety considerations.
- Luggage limits are strictly enforced, typically allowing 10–12 kg of personal baggage per trekker. Excess luggage can be carried by porters or arranged separately at an additional cost.
- Comprehensive travel insurance covering high-altitude trekking, emergency medical treatment, and helicopter evacuation is mandatory. Proof of insurance must be provided before the trek begins.

