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Kanchenjunga North Base Camp Trek

Remote peaks, sacred villages, unforgettable views

Duration: 17 Days

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

Trek Grade: Moderate to Strenuous

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 North Base Camp Trek is one of Nepal's most remote and spectacular Himalayan journeys, leading to **Pangpema**, the North Base Camp of **Mt. Kanchenjunga (8,586 m)** is the world's third-highest mountain. This trek takes adventurers deep into the untouched wilderness of eastern Nepal within the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area, offering dramatic mountain scenery, pristine landscapes, and rich cultural encounters.

The journey begins with a scenic flight to Bhadrapur followed by a drive through the lush tea gardens of Ilam and onward to Taplejung. From here, the trail follows the Tamor River and gradually ascends through dense forests of bamboo, rhododendron, and pine, passing traditional villages influenced by Tibetan culture. As altitude increases, the terrain opens into vast alpine valleys with glaciers, moraines, and towering peaks.

The ultimate highlight is the day hike to **Kanchenjunga North Base Camp (Pangpema)**, where trekkers are rewarded with breathtaking, close-up views of Kanchenjunga's massive north face, along with surrounding peaks such as Jannu (Kumbhakarna), Yalung Kang, and Twins Peak. With its limited access, minimal crowds, and raw Himalayan beauty, this trek is ideal for experienced trekkers seeking a true expedition-style adventure.

Trip Highlights

- Close-up views of Mt. Kanchenjunga (8,586 m) from Pangpema, the North Base Camp
- Trek through the remote and pristine Kanchenjunga Conservation Area
- Stunning mountain panoramas including Mt. Jannu (Kumbhakarna) and surrounding peaks
- Authentic cultural experience in traditional Tibetan-influenced villages
- True off-the-beaten-path adventure with minimal crowds and untouched landscapes

Itinerary

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

Morning flight to Bhadrapur followed by a scenic drive through Ilam's tea gardens and rolling hills; evening walk around Fikkal/Kanyam and overnight at a lodge.



Day 2: Fikkal/Kanyam → Taplejung (1,800 m)

Drive through eastern hill landscapes, traditional villages, and terraced farms; arrive in Taplejung for trek briefing and final preparations.

Day 3: Taplejung → Sekathum (Drive) (1,600 m)

Drive via Mitlung and Tapethok along the Tamor River; pass rural settlements and enter the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area.

Day 4: Sekathum → Amjilosa (2,510 m)

Trek along narrow trails through lush forests, crossing suspension bridges and steep sections; gradual ascent to the small settlement of Amjilosa.

Day 5: Amjilosa → Gyabla (2,730 m)

Trek through bamboo and rhododendron forests with moderate climbs; enjoy cool mountain air and reach Gyabla village.

Day 6: Gyabla → Ghunsa (3,595 m)

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

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

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

Day 8: Ghunsa → Kambachen (4,100 m)

Trek along the Ghunsa Khola through alpine terrain; enjoy stunning views of Jannu (Kumbhakarna) and surrounding peaks.

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

Acclimatization day with optional hikes toward nearby viewpoints or glaciers; rest, hydrate, and monitor altitude conditions.

Day 10: Kambachen → Lhonak (4,785 m)

Trek across rocky moraines and open valleys with dramatic mountain scenery; reach the remote settlement of Lhonak.

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

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



Day 12: Lhonak → Ghunsa (3,595 m)

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

Day 13: Ghunsa → Amjilosa (2,510 m)

Long descent through forests and river valleys; retrace steps to Amjilosa with warmer temperatures.

Day 14: Amjilosa → Sekathum (1,600 m)

Trek downhill through narrow trails and suspension bridges; arrive at Sekathum near the Tamor River.

Day 15: Sekathum → Taplejung (1,800 m)

Drive back to Taplejung through remote villages and river valleys; rest and celebrate trek completion.

Day 16: Taplejung → Fikkal/Ilam (1,677 m)

Drive to Ilam region, enjoying scenic hills and tea plantations; relax and explore the local area.

Day 17: Fikkal/Ilam → Kathmandu (Flight)

Drive to Bhadrapur Airport and fly back to Kathmandu; transfer to hotel and end of the 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.

