

Makalu to Mera Pioneer Trek

Trip Code: PXMM

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP

INVALID GRADE



HIGHLIGHTS

- A challenging trekking holiday through a remote and little-travelled part of Nepal
- Views of Makalu and Kangchenjunga and the very impressive Chamlang
- Wilderness camping in remote valleys, beside mountain tarns and on high ridges
- Rope-up to cross the Mera La, high on the slopes of Nepal's finest trekking peak
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday

AT A GLANCE

- 18 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5415 metres
- Join at Kathmandu

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This great trekking adventure starts out as for the Malaku approach; heading north for several days beyond the last village at Tashigaon to the lake of Kalo Pokhari (4100m) and then turning off westwards into the unknown. Once we have left the Makalu trail, we will trek for more than a week on scant trails used only occasionally by shepherds and camp out in some of the wildest locations imaginable with superb views of Makalu, distant Kangchenjunga and a host of less well-known summits. Our route will take us across the heart of the Makalu Barun National Park, traversing 3 great valleys that descend from the flanks of Chamlang (7319m) and its outlying peaks and glaciers. These are the valleys of the Isuwa, Apsuwa and Sangkhuwa kholas which ultimately flow into the mighty Arun River. Making our way across the upper reaches of these valleys through a pristine Himalayan wilderness populated by blue sheep, snow leopards and bearded vultures, this ground-breaking trek then crosses the Dhunga Pass (5060m) to reach the Hongu Valley below Mera Peak (6476m). Finally, after a rest day at Kongma Dingma, close beneath Chamlang's stunning south-west face, we will put on our crampons and rope up for the crossing of the glaciated Mera La (5415m), and complete our trek out to Lukla over several days. Unique to KE, this is a challenging trekking adventure for experienced Himalayan travellers.

Is this holiday for you?

This tough trek includes the full range of Nepalese trekking conditions from well-maintained village paths to rugged and rarely used trails over rock, scree and scrub, as well as straightforward roped-up glacier travel. There will be some long trekking days, a couple of 5000-metre pass crossings and sections of difficult and steep-sided valley with tricky and exposed trails and several unbridged river crossings. This holiday will suit experienced Himalayan trekkers with a good level of fitness, a head for heights and basic familiarity with the use of crampons and an ice-axe.

Although a KE group completed this trek in 2022 the upcoming departure will once again be run as a reconnaissance. This is because the challenging and untreked nature of the route may require the local team to make itinerary changes during the trek itself. This is a camping trek with a full Nepalese crew, spacious 2-person tents, foam mattresses, a dining tent with a table and chairs and a toilet tent. We have added an additional contingency day to the itinerary.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Chitwan Jungle Extension

The jungles of southern Nepal are an interesting counterpoint to trekking in the foothills or the high Himalaya. Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides a relaxing and comfortable base for a wildlife safari and cultural village experience. During two days of wildlife viewing in the Chitwan National Park 'buffer zone' - the interface area between visitors and the animals that live at Chitwan - you will be accompanied by expert guides on safaris by jeep by boat and on foot.

3 days from
US\$1,680 per person



Kathmandu Tour - Nagarkot and Bhaktapur

The Kathmandu Valley contains the cities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself, all of which were once independent kingdoms. An exploration of the valley's historic and cultural sights is an excellent way to begin or end your adventure in Nepal. Highlights of this tour includes a very early drive up to Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim, the perfect place to watch a Himalayan sunrise. This is followed by a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, renowned for its temples and traditional buildings.

1 day from
US\$175 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified Nepalese tour leader
- An IFMGA Guide to oversee the crossing of the Mera La
- Kathmandu Airport transfers
- Internal flights and all land transport involved in the itinerary
- Accommodation as described
- All meals
- Full trekking service including all equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- Once on trek the group will be assisted by porters and a local guide
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request

What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Nepalese Visa
- Tips for porters and other trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals included in the holiday price from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 23.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Our camping holidays in Nepal are accompanied by an experienced and well trained trek cook and his team of assistants. Breakfasts will include porridge or cereals and sometimes eggs, with tea, coffee and hot chocolate. Lunches are generally prepared on the trail and can include cooked or tinned vegetables, rice, chips, freshly made Tibetan bread, as well as tinned tuna, meats or cheese. On occasion this can be augmented by noodle soup. On occasion there will be a packed lunch instead. Dinners always start off with soup, followed by a locally inspired main course such as rice, dal and spicy vegetables, or a more international dish like pasta with a tomato sauce or pizza and chips. Dessert can be tinned fruit with custard or rice pudding or cake with custard. The emphasis is on providing a high-carbohydrate and largely vegetarian diet, which we have found to be easily digestible at high altitude. For the first few and last few days of the trek there will be the chance to purchase additional snacks and drinks from simple shops and tea houses. All meals while on trek and also while staying at your Kathmandu hotel are included in the trip price.

Accommodation

During this holiday the group will spend 3 nights in Kathmandu at an excellent and centrally-located hotel such as the Shanker. On trek, the first 15 nights are full-service camping. We provide spacious 2 person tents (foam mattresses are also provided), a dining tent complete with table and chairs where you will eat your meals and relax, a kitchen tent in which the cook crew produce your meals and one (or more usually two) toilet tents. Your local crew will set up the camp each evening and take it down again in the morning. You will be served with a cup of 'bed-tea' each morning and provided with a bowl of water with which to wash. Water for hand washing is also provided at each meal. On arrival into camp each afternoon hot drinks and snacks will be provided in the dining tent. For the final 4 nights on trek the group will stay in simple simple lodges. All accommodation is arranged on a twin sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. It is possible to hire a single tent while on trek for an additional cost. Please note single tent hire does not include single rooms in hotels. For the nights in Kathmandu single room occupancy can be arranged at supplementary cost. Additional hotel nights in Kathmandu can also be pre-booked.

Internal flights

Access to the high and remote areas of the Himalaya where our treks start is often only possible using internal flights. The changeable nature of mountain weather makes flying conditions complex. In addition, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal does not operate to the same standards as those of western nations and all airlines in Nepal appear on the UK Air Safety List (ASL), and are banned from operating commercial air services to, from, and within the United Kingdom. Flying in Nepal is an acknowledged risk, and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice provides further details which you can read on their [website](#). KE is mindful of its duty of care to clients travelling with us in Nepal and we are stakeholders in an annual independent air audit of Nepal airlines undertaken by UK tour operators, most recently carried out in February 2025. KE only uses airlines in Nepal which have been approved by this audit. We continue to cooperate with other tour operators to monitor aviation safety in Nepal and will ensure we remain a stakeholder in any further air safety audits. While we have taken appropriate action to try to minimise the risks of flying in Nepal, you should be aware that flying in mountainous terrain is not without any risk.

Please note that poor weather can cause delays on internal flights. If at the start of your holiday internal flights are cancelled for the day, you will spend an extra night near the airport (this may be at a hotel other than the group hotel). On the majority of trips there is enough flexibility in the trekking itinerary to make up 1 or possibly 2 lost days, but an alternative trek will be provided if delays to internal flights mean the original itinerary (or a shortened version of it) is no longer feasible.

For trips that end with an internal flight out of the mountains with no alternative road access, we have included 2 nights in Kathmandu as a contingency against delay. In the extremely unlikely event that a delay to your internal flight causes you to miss your homeward international flight, KE will re-book international flights for Flight Inclusive clients, but please be aware that clients booking on a Land Only basis will be responsible for re-booking their onward travel and for any associated costs. We advise you to take out suitable travel insurance and to keep your receipts, as you may subsequently be able to make a claim.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified Nepalese tour leader, assisted by an experienced team including Sherpa guides and porters. An IFMGA Guide will join the group for the crossing of the Mera La.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £200 (or equivalent in US dollars, Euros etc.) changed into local currency, should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including porter and trek crew tips, drinks etc. It is not necessary to obtain local currency prior to departure. Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are equally acceptable for exchange in Nepal. We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of cash, since you will exchange the majority of this on the day of your arrival in Kathmandu. If you prefer not to carry all of your spending money in cash, it is possible to withdraw money from ATMs in Kathmandu using your debit or credit card. During the trek there are few opportunities to purchase anything.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service. Normally the porters and any other trek staff are given their tips at the end of the trek and this is best done as a group. Your Nepali tour leader will advise the group on an appropriate level of tipping. Most groups will hand out the tips with a bit of ceremony (or sometimes a party) on the last evening, to mark the end of the holiday. As a guide, we recommend that each group member contributes around £120 (in rupees) to these tips. At the end of their trek many people also like to donate various items of equipment to the porters and trek staff who work so hard to make the trip a success. Boots, gloves, hats, scarves and even socks are always warmly received by the porters. Your tour leader will make arrangements for a fair distribution (possibly by raffle) amongst the trek crew. Please note that you will have the opportunity to tip your tour leader separately (and additionally) during dinner on the final evening of the holiday.

Baggage Allowance

Your main item of luggage should be a sturdy kit bag, duffle bag or similar which will be carried during the trek by porters and should weigh no more than 15kg. If you are picking up a sleeping bag and down jacket from KE in Kathmandu, you need to factor in the weight of these items (around 3kg) and allow space in your bag for them. Your personal mountaineering equipment (boots, axe, crampons etc) will be carried separately. On arrival at Tumlingtar, you will hand these items of equipment to your trek leader who will pack them in communal bags until you need them. You should also take on your holiday a daypack of approximately 40 litres capacity.

For all STOL flights in Nepal, the normal allowance for hold baggage AND hand baggage combined is 15kg. But, for our climbing holidays we have arranged an allowance of 15kg hold baggage PLUS 5kg cabin baggage. You may also wish to consider wearing your heavy mountaineering boots and any heavier clothing on these flights. Please be aware that you will have to pay any charges for excess personal baggage above this allowance at check-in, and that excess baggage may have to be flown separately. It is possible to leave items not required on trek at the hotel in Kathmandu. For your international flights, please check the baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates (see *Health & Vaccinations below*), **and visas for your holiday**. Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Visa Nepal

All nationalities require a visa. The visa process is partly automated and the fee is \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, \$125 for 90 days. The visa is FREE for children under 10 years. The visa allows multiple re-entry. Payment must be made in cash and USD, GBP or Euros are accepted.

Part of this on-arrival visa process involves filling in a 'Tourist Visa Application Form' and you can simplify the procedure at Kathmandu Airport by filling this form in online (**within 15 days of travelling**) at [this link](#). This generates a receipt which you present (hard copy or saved on your phone) on arrival. This should allow you to go straight to the cashier to pay for your visa and has the potential to save you time in the visa queue.

Whilst these are not now needed for the visa process, we recommend that you travel with at least 2 spare passport photographs.

Trekking Permits - what do we need from you ?

Mount Everest Marathon (MEM). Everest Monasteries Trek (EVP). Ganesh Himal Panorama Trek (GHP). Lamjung Himal Trek (LHT). Middle Hills Arun River to Dudh Kosi (MHT). Highlights of Dolpo - Tarap to Phoksumdo (DNB). Dolpo to Mugu Trek (DTM). Around Manaslu Trek (MAN).

For each of these holidays, we need your passport details and we need to send through to Nepal ahead of your departure a scan of the information pages of your passport and a scan of a passport-style photograph of yourself. Please send these scans to us once your holiday is guaranteed.

In addition, for Conservation Area treks and other treks requiring Special Permits - DNB, DTM, MAN - you will be required on arrival in Kathmandu to provide your passport (with your visa) for presentation at the Nepal Tourism Board. Your passport will be returned to you by your tour leader at dinner.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. In addition you should check whether any specific vaccinations are needed to the regions that you are travelling to. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Malaria

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

Severe Allergies

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Currency

The unit of currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. For this trip you need to be aerobically fit and also comfortable with walking up to 8 or 9 hours each day. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime. Regular walking in hill country is the best preparation for a trip of this nature, but running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing better stamina. Whatever your chosen method of training, before departure, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country. For this trip it is also recommended that you gain some experience of walking on moderately angled snow slopes wearing crampons. No technical mountaineering experience is required and clients will be instructed in the basic techniques of glacier walking prior to the crossing of the Mera La.

Climate

October to November and March to May are the best times for trekking in Nepal. These months either side of the summer monsoon season are neither too hot in the foothills nor too cold in the higher elevations and they offer the best conditions for trekking. Pre-monsoon is the time to see the colourful blooms of the rhododendron at lower elevations. The post-monsoon months usually offer the clearest skies and the most settled weather. At either of these periods you will encounter a wide range of daytime temperatures during your holiday from approximately 25°C in Kathmandu to approximately 14°C at 3000 metres and approximately 3°C at 5000m. The 'real feel' temperature in the middle of the day will be much warmer than this. At night in the rarefied air the temperatures plummet. You can expect to experience overnight temperatures below freezing above approximately 4000 metres elevation. At our highest overnight stopping places, the night time temperature could drop as low as minus 15°C. Extended periods of rain or snow are very unlikely outside of the monsoon period but short lived storms can and do occur. It is very important that you are equipped and prepared for potentially very low temperatures.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Nepal Guide: Lonely Planet
- Rough Guide to Nepal: Rough Guides
- Trekking and Climbing in Nepal. Steve Razzetti
- Kathmandu and the Kingdom of Nepal. Prakash Raj
- Nepal Phrasebook. Lonely Planet

Maps

Makalu B.C. 1:90,000 Scale. MapPoint, Kathmandu.

The map covers the majority of the route from Tumlingtar as far as the crossing of the Mera La. The names of the camps that we use and of other landform features once we leave the Makalu trail are not indicated on the map.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

MTM Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. Use your own experience and judgement to determine what to bring with you but please ensure you have all of the mandatory items. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. Please make sure you have read the section on baggage allowance in the trip notes. It is possible to leave clothes or other items not required on trek at the group hotel.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots (minimum B1 – see notes)
- Gaiters
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Baselayer shirts
- Baselayer leggings

- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Travel clothes
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Thermal gloves
- Warm and waterproof gloves or mittens
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x 2
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep your kit bag contents dry)
- Small padlock (to lock your kit bag)
- Daypack 40 litres

- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -20°C)*
- Warm jacket (down)*
- 'Walking' ice axe*
- Crampons*
- Climbing harness*

■ Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), Diamox, painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent (DEET), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

The following items are optional:

- Trekking poles (recommended)
- Lightweight hiking boots
- Microspikes (Kahtoola) or similar are easily attached to any boots and can be more useful than crampons in some icy (non-glaciated) conditions.
- Shorts
- Sleeping bag liner
- Thermarest or similar camping mattress (a foam mattress is provided)
- Scarf or buff
- Swimwear
- Camera
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)

Notes ON Specialist equipment:

For this trip you will need boots capable of taking crampons securely. You will also need to bring a 'walking' ice axe*, crampons* a climbing harness* and a climbing helmet*. These items are required principally for the crossing of the Mera La.

*FREE Gear Hire

You can reserve a sleeping bag, down jacket and climbing gear free of charge. Please make all requests at least 4 weeks prior to the trip departure date. Please note all hire / rental equipment is issued in Kathmandu. Please remember to allow room in your kit bag for these items.

Cultural Sensitivity

The Nepalese are still traditional and conservative in the way they dress. Therefore to avoid embarrassment on both sides we recommend that you respect this and do not wear revealing clothing or sleeveless tops while visiting Nepal. Shorts are acceptable, but they should reach to just above the knee and be modest and for women it is preferable to wear trousers or a long skirt.

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kathmandu. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving mid-afternoon on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Kathmandu usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

MTM Why KE

Get off the beaten track! This is a brilliant route through a rugged and spectacular region which is rarely trekked. This is exploratory trekking in the style of the early Nepal expeditions and you can only do it with KE.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 04/12/2025 and the trip is subject to change