



The Langtang Trek

Itinerary

Day 1

We depart from the UK for the overnight flight to Kathmandu.

Day 2

We arrive in Kathmandu in the afternoon and are met by some of our team of Sherpas. We transfer by private coach to the comfortable Hotel Marsyangdi situated in the very centre of the Thamel tourist district of the city. We are within close walking distance of the many restaurants, bars and shops which this part of the city is famous for. After checking into our rooms we can relax in the hotel's pleasant garden before an early evening meal. Flying to Kathmandu produces considerable jet lag on this first night and most of us will be asleep by 10pm.

Day 3

A free day to explore this lively and exotic city. Guidebooks will suggest many popular excursions including the Buddhist stupa at Bodnath and the Monkey Temple at Swayambunath. These are best visited using a taxi or by bicycles which are available for rental at every street corner. In truth there are so many places to see in the Kathmandu valley that you will not have time for all of them. Many people enjoy just wandering about the narrow alleyways of Asan market place, or down by the temples and pagodas of Durbar Square, near to the old hippy area of Freak Street. Others will need to scour the plethora of walking and climbing shops for that last essential piece of trekking equipment. And for those who just have to stay in touch with the outside world you can check your email in one of the many internet cafes which have sprung up around Thamel Chowk and the Kathmandu guest house. In the evening we will visit a traditional Newari restaurant for an authentic Nepali meal and live entertainment.

Day 4

After an early breakfast we depart our hotel and travel by private coach out of the Kathmandu valley, following the Trisuli River to the town of the same name. Up to this point the road is in fair condition, but it then deteriorates as it climbs and snakes its way up an increasingly precipitous hillside. For many years, the village of Trisuli was the start of the Langtang trek, but the new road to Dhunche bypasses the old trail and reduces the number of days necessary for the trek. During the rainy season there are frequent landslides, which may keep the road closed until sometime in mid-October. For part of the way, the road clings to the edge of a steep mountain. To reach Dhunche can take 8 hours or more from Kathmandu. We then continue on the new military road which goes as far as Syabrubensi where we stay overnight in a local lodge in the centre of the village. Syabrubensi is an attractive village with large stone houses. The older part of the village is below the road and is almost completely hidden from view by newer buildings that have been constructed along the road.

Day 5

From Syabrubensi we begin our trek by following the Langtang Khola river, a river we will be following over the next few days, all the way to the head of the valley. The valley at this point is uninhabited and densely forested with oak and rhododendron. After passing a bridge over the Langtang Khola the path ascends to the clearing and collection of lodges known as Lama Hotel.

Day 6

From Lama Hotel the trail climbs up to Ghora Tabela with spectacular, fleeting glimpses of Langtang Lirung (7,244m) through the trees. At the small village of Ghora Tabela (3,000m) the trail emerges from the forest and the stupendous peaks of Langtang II and Langtang Lirung appear. Ghora Tabela houses a small army post and good lodge here where

you can get rest and have a drink. Leaving Ghora Tabela, the path follows the delightful Langtang Khola, climbing steadily up to the spread-out Langtang village (3,500m). Langtang is another Tamang village with stone-and-wood houses and yak grazing pastures.

Day 7

At Langtang we are now above the treeline and the landscape is typically high Himalayan with short grass, juniper bushes and scrub. Chortens and long mani walls line the route to our next camp at Kyanjin Gompa (3,795m). Kyanjin is a small Buddhist monastery but there are also some trekkers lodges and a famous cheese factory located here. There are fantastic views towards the head of the valley including a view of Gangchempo (6386m), Tilmans 'Fluted Peak'. We should reach the campsite by lunchtime, allowing us to take an acclimatisation hike later in the afternoon. One popular excursion is to climb the lateral moraine north of the Gompa for a close view of the Lirung Glacier and icefall. Alternatively, if you have more energy, you can climb to the top of what is known as Kyanjin Ri (4,775m), the prayer flag-topped peak directly north of Kyanjin Gompa.

Day 8

From Kyanjin we head further up the Langtang valley to the campsite at Langshisa Kharka, nestling amongst the highest peaks in the valley, including Dorje Lhakpa (6990m), Pemthang Ri (6842m) and Kimshun (6745m). This walk will only take the morning, and we will have the afternoon free for local exploration.

Day 9

We have scheduled a full day here at Langshisa Kharka for local exploration and acclimatisation. One option is to trek up the furthest reaches of the Langtang glacier towards Hagens Col, perhaps for a glimpse of the summit of Shishapangma, situated just over the border in Tibet. Another possibility is to climb up to the remote Tilmans Pass, situated on the southern side of the Langshisa glacier for some stunning views of the Jugal Himal. Alternatively, if snow conditions permit, we may be able to make the ascent of the easy trekking peak of Tsergo Ri (4984m). On the afternoon of day 11 we retrace our steps down the valley to our previous camp at Kyanjin Gompa, or a short distance below on the far side of the valley.

Day 10-13

The next few days are set aside for the crossing of the Ganja La Pass. Because conditions vary it is impossible to be precise about a daily itinerary, and the exact approach will depend on local conditions and will be assessed by the group leader. From Langshisa Kharka we return down the main valley until we are able to cross the Langtang River. We then ascend through rhododendron forest and then across open pastures to a collection of herders huts at Ngegang – also known as the 'low' camp for the Ganja La. A long ascent up scree and boulders take us past two small lakes to the high camp for the Ganja La pass, situated on a rocky moraine with spectacular view across the valley to a plethora of peaks which lie on the Tibetan border. Although it may be possible to go across the pass in one day from the low camp, we have planned to spend a night at the higher camp. This will give us some leeway in our itinerary in case of bad weather or deep snow. In the case that the pass is snow covered, we may need to use ice and crampons and a rope for security. From our high camp we have a cold, early start and make the final ascent to the crest of the pass at around 5122m. The last 100 metres to the pass is something of a scramble and can be tricky after snowfall. The rocky crest of the pass is adorned by lines of prayer flags fluttering in the breeze. A fantastic view greets us, looking both north towards Tibet and the huge massif of Shishapangma, and south to the peaks of the Jugal Himal. But unless the weather is calm, the pass can be a cold and hostile spot, and we will probably want to be descending as quickly as possible. We scramble down the steep and loose moraine slope on the southern side of the pass, and work our way through a mass of boulders until we can pick up the Yangri Khola river which we follow as far as the yak herders huts at Keldang (4300m). From Keldang our descent route follows a prominent ridge line, crossing several minor spurs as we loose altitude. This area is notorious for being cloudy from early morning, but if we are lucky and there are clear views, this is one of the finest days on the whole trek. Eventually we enter thick rhododendron forest before reaching the small collection of huts at Dukpu.

Day 14

From Dhukpu we descend the prominent ridgeline and then detour slightly off our descent route to make the ascent of the small hill of Yangrima (3770m) This superb viewpoint gives an outstanding panorama which includes Gauri Shankar (7145m), a huge mountain with twin peaks which dominate the Rolwaling Himal. We can look north to the entire Jugal Himal range whilst to the east we can see Numbur (6957m). Looking south we can gaze across the endless ridgelines of the Helambu region. We continue our descent to the large Sherpa village of Tarke Ghyang (2560m), the name of which literally means 'the temple of 100 horses,' derived from a local legend. This will be the first village since Kyanjin, and the first beers and cokes for nearly a week!

Day 15-16

We descend easily down through the delightful villages of the Helambu to the small hamlet of Mulkharka where our last night under canvas gives us a wonderful view of the lights of Kathmandu at night.

Day 17

We walk for about an hour to the road head at Sundarijal from where we return to Kathmandu by private bus. If we are on time, and the road is in good condition, we should be back in our hotel in time for lunch with the remainder of the day free at leisure.

Day 18

A free day in Kathmandu which will also double as a spare day in case we need an extra day on trek for the Ganja La crossing. If this day is used on trek we will return to Kathmandu at lunchtime on day 18.

Day 19

We depart our hotel early in the morning for the homeward flight back to the UK.