Kanchenjunga Circuit Trek

Facts

Destination: Nepal

Trip Difficulty: Strenuous

Trip Style: Trekking and Tour

Transport: Private Vehicle / Aeroplane

Food: Breakfast+Lunch+Dinner

Accommodation: 3-Star Hotel + Teahouses + Lodges

Group Size: Min 1

Max Elevation: 5143 m

The Kanchenjunga Circuit trek is an extraordinary 21-day adventure that circles Mt. Kanchenjunga (8,586 meters), the world's third-highest peak. Along the Nepal-India border in the eastern Himalayas, this comprehensive trek offers a complete circuit of Mount Kanchenjunga. It combines both the northern and southern base camp routes, passing through Nepal's remote Taplejung districts.

The name "Kanchenjunga" comes from Tibetan, meaning "Five Treasures of the Great Snow"- referring to the mountain's five peaks. Until 1852, Kanchenjunga was believed to be the world's highest peak. The region remained isolated mainly until Nepal opened its borders to trekkers in 1988. The mountain holds deep spiritual significance for the local Limbu, Rai, and Sherpa communities, who consider it sacred.

The Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA), established in 1997, showcases the region's incredible biodiversity. The trek route traverses multiple ecological zones, from subtropical

forests to alpine meadows. Wildlife enthusiasts might glimpse rare species such as snow leopards, red pandas, Himalayan black bears, and musk deer.

The Kanchenjunga Circuit trekking begins with a Kathmandu to Bhadrapur flight followed by a scenic drive to Taplejung, the gateway to the Kanchenjunga region. From there, another road journey takes you to Sekathum, the starting point of the trek. The trail winds through lush forests and traditional settlements, gradually climbing through Amjilosa and Gyable before reaching Ghunsa.

As the trek progresses higher, the landscape changes dramatically. Ghunsa is the last permanent village on the Kanchenjunga north base camp trek route and an important place to rest and acclimatize. Here, you can visit the ancient Tashi Choeling Gompa. The trail then continues through the high settlements of Khambachen and Lhonak.

The trek reaches its first major highlight at the Kanchenjunga North Base Camp at Pangpema (5,143 meters). Here, you'll admire the view of Kanchenjunga's north face, along with Chang Himal, Jannu Peak, and numerous Tibet Himalayan ranges. After soaking in these appealing vistas, retrace your steps through Lhonak back to Ghunsa.

From Ghunsa, the path leads to one of the trek's most challenging sections- crossing the Sele La Pass at 4,290 meters. This pass is a crucial junction connecting the northern and southern base camp routes. After crossing Sele La, the trail descends to Tseram. Walking alongside the Yalung Glacier, you'll reach Ramche while passing through diverse ecosystems, from rhododendrons and pine forests to glacial moraines and high-altitude grasslands. Keep your eyes open for blue sheep grazing on the mountainsides.

The southern portion of the trek culminates at Oktang Base Camp, also known as Kanchenjunga South Base Camp (4,730 meters). This vantage point offers enthralling views of Kanchenjunga's three main peaks, each towering above 8,400 meters. The descent leads

through Tseram and Tortong, where the landscape gradually transforms back to lower elevations with moss-covered trees and vibrant forests.

The Kanchenjunga trekking concludes in Yamphudin, also known as Sherpagaon. From here, you'll transition to a scenic drive to Illam, Nepal's famous tea-growing region. Finally, the Kanchenjunga circuit adventure ends with a return to Bhadrapur for your flight back to Kathmandu.

Highlights

Key Kanchenjunga Circuit Trek Highlights

• Witness the sweeping vistas of Mount Kanchenjunga (8,586m) and its five peaks, plus views of Makalu, Lhotse, and Everest on clear days.

• Stay in authentic mountain villages: Ghunsa (Tibetan monastery), Tseram (stone houses), and Yamphudin (Limbu-Rai culture).

• Experience uncrowded trails from subtropical cardamom fields to alpine meadows with spring rhododendrons.

• Spot rare wildlife in Kanchenjunga Conservation Area: red pandas, snow leopards, black bears, and 200+ bird species.

• Connect with diverse ethnic groups: Limbu (Kirat traditions), Rai (mountain music), and Sherpa (Buddhist customs).

• Explore massive Himalayan glaciers: Kanchenjunga and Yalung glaciers.

• Visit both base camps of Mt. Kanchenjunga, Pangpema (North Base Camp, 5,143m), and Oktang (South Base Camp, 4,730 m).

• Cross the challenging Sele La Pass (4,290m), a gateway to Kanchenjunga's North and South Base Camps.

• Get a chance to tour Ilam's renowned tea estates and taste Nepal's finest orthodox tea.

Day to Day Itinerary

Day 01: Arrival in Kathmandu (1,400m/4,593ft)

Day 02: Full-Day Kathmandu Sightseeing and Trek Preparation.

Day 03: Fly to Bhadrapur Airport and Drive to Taplejung (1,820m/5,971ft)

Day 04: Drive to Sekathum (1,575m/5,167ft)

Day 05: Trek to Amjilosa (2,310m/7,579ft)

Day 06: Trek to Gyable (2,730m/8,957ft)

Day 07: Trek to Ghunsa (3,475m/11,401ft)

Day 08: Acclimatization Day in Ghunsa

Day 09: Trek to Khambachen (4,050m/13,287ft)

Day 10: Trek to Lhonak (4,780m/15,682ft)

Day 11: Trek to Pangpema, Kanchenjunga North Base camp (5,143m/16,864ft) and Back to Lhonak

Day 12: Trek to Ghunsa (3,475m/11,401ft)

Day 13: Trek to Sele La Kharka (4,200m/13,780ft)

Day 14: Trek Over Sele La Pass and Trek Down to Tseram (3,870m/12,697ft)

Day 15: Trek to Oktang Base Camp (4,730m/15,518ft) and Back to Ramche (4,580m/15,026ft)

Day 16: Trek back to Tseram (3,870m/12,697ft)

Day 17: Trek from Tseram to Tortong (2,995m/9,826ft)

Day 18: Trek to Yamphudin (2,080m/6,824ft)

Day 19: Drive to Ilam

Day 20: Drive to Bhadrapur and Fly to Kathmandu

Day 21: Final Departure

Cost Includes

Accommodation

- Three nights' Twin-sharing/double accommodation with breakfast at a 3-star category hotel in Kathmandu: two nights before the trek and one night after the trek. (Hotel category upgrade & private room accommodation can be organized at an extra cost)
- Best available twin-sharing guesthouse accommodation during the trek for 17 nights in the Kanchenjunga Region.

Meals & Drinking Water

- Full board standard meals during the trek (Breakfasts, Lunches, and Dinners) including one hot drink.
- Seasonal fruits in the evening on a trek.
- Cultural dinner in Nepali Restaurant after trekking.

Transportation

- Kathmandu International and Domestic airport pick-up and drop-off on a private vehicle as per your arrival date and time.
- Round-trip Flight ticket between Kathmandu and Bhadrapur.
- Transport Bhadrapur to Taplajung by shared Jeep.

- Taplajung to Sakethum by sharing a jeep.
- Drive to Illam by shared Jeep.
- Drive to Bhadrapur by shared Jeep.
- Kathmandu valley tour included a private Vehicle.

Guide and Staff

- Experienced, first-aid trained, government licensed, English speaking, and locally recruited Nepal Hiking Treks' trekking guide (2 guides for group sizes of more than 7 people).
- Porter to carry your luggage during the trek (1 porter for every 2 clients)
- Wages, accommodation, meals, gear, insurance, and medications for all staff.
- Export a tour guide for Kathmandu sightseeing.

Trek Permits

- Kanchenjunga Conservation Area Permit (KCAP).
- Kanchenjunga Restricted Area Entry Permit.
- Trekkers' Information Management System (TIMS) card.

NHT benefits

- First aid /kit bag with oxygen meters, trekking map.
- Trip completion certificate by Nepal Hiking Trek.

Administrative & Taxes

- Domestic Airport tax.
- All our administrative expenses and government taxes.

Cost Excludes

- International flight fare and Nepal Entry Visa fee.
- Kathmandu Valley Tour entrance fee.
- Travel insurance for both medical and high-altitude emergency evacuation coverage.
- Snacks and any beverages including bottled and boiled water.
- Tips and gratitude to the trekking staff and driver.
- Personal trekking gear and equipment, as well as personal expenses.
- Extra night hotel in the city (if needed).
- Any other expenses that are not mentioned in the Price Includes section.