

37
DAYS

CHO OYU EXPEDITION

Summit the 6th highest mountain in the world



DATES

1st September - 7th October 2016

(Fly in - Fly out from Lhasa, Due to border Closure)

**HIMALAYAN
ASCENT** 



Starts from

\$17,500

GRADE/FITNESS

This expedition requires excellent fitness and prior experience of a Himalayan expedition. You should be able to carry at least 20kg, demonstrate strong endurance and high mountaineering experience. The NW ridge is the classic route that involves steep climbs on an ice cliff and over a rock band. The maximum altitude is 8201m.

Cost includes:

4 nights Kathmandu accommodation, airport transfer to hotel and welcome dinner, all necessary climbing and trekking permits, China visa, experienced expedition leader and base camp manager, government liaison officer, all meals and accommodation during journey to base camp and return, high weight allowance of personal gear to base camp, fully serviced powered base camp (including personal tent, heated dining tent and communication tent, full satellite communication system (pay per use), all meals/snacks and hot showers), ICOM 2-way radio system for all guides to communicate between camps, team of Sherpa climbing guides to set up and stock all higher camps, Sherpa guides to carry personal gear to higher camps, all meals and tents above base camp, high Sherpa climbing guide on summit day, maximum oxygen allowance with the TopOut delivery system (allows multiple summit attempts), extensive high altitude wilderness first aid kit, porters to carry group equipment, all group climbing equipment, all other charges for route fixing and expedition duffels.

Cost excludes:

international flights to Kathmandu, tips and summit bonuses for Sherpa guides, Nepal tourist visa, meals in Kathmandu (USD 10-15 per meal), aerated and alcoholic beverages, personal items (e.g. phone calls, laundry), travel insurance (including early departure, mountain search and rescue) and personal climbing gear.





HIGHLIGHTS

- Summit the 6th highest mountain in the world
- Stunning high altitude Tibetan plateau landscape
- Insight into ancient Tibetan culture

OVERVIEW

Located 20km to the west of Mount Everest on the Nepal-Tibet border, Cho Oyu is a true Himalayan giant. At 8201m it is the 6th highest peak in the world and an excellent objective, be it for your once-in-a-lifetime 8000m peak, or as your final preparation before attempting Mount Everest.

We tackle the mountain via the North West ridge, which is the original route used by the Austrian team who were the first to climb the mountain in 1952. Access to the mountain is notoriously easy, as we drive from Kathmandu, cross the Himalayas and after some acclimatisation stops and day hikes, arrive at Cho Oyu Base Camp (BC). A two day trek brings us to Advance Base Camp, from where we tackle the mountain via the placement of three camps. The climb on the mountain is relatively straight-forward, with the two cruxes being a short but steep icecliff between Camps 1 and 2, and a prolonged, steep rock band directly above Camp 3.

Given the extreme altitude, the mountain is a very serious objective and neither the climb nor your preparation for the climb should be taken lightly. You'll need to be as fit as you can possibly be, and when you're climbing through the rock band above Camp 3 on your summit push, you'll understand why! Once we reach the cusp of the summit plateau in the early hours of the morning, you'll have to summon the energy to cross the wide plateau at over 8,100m before finally standing on the main summit. If the weather is clear, once you are on the summit the spectacular panorama will make it all worth it. From the top you'll be able to see Shishapangma, Gyachung Kang, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, Makalu and of course, Mount Everest!

This 5½ week expedition is suited to experienced Himalayan climbers with previous expedition experience to mountains of at least 6000m, but preferably 7000m.





EXPEDITION BREAKDOWN

Drive (6 days)

Access to Chinese or Cho Oyu BC is a simple jeep journey from Kathmandu, cross the Nepal-Tibet border and drive into Tibet. We will stop and slowly acclimatise in townships along the Friendship highway. Some days we'll break entirely and walk up to ridges to enjoy first views of Shisapangma and Cho Oyu.

Base camp (approx. 2 week)

True BC or Advanced BC (ABC) is a 2 day walk from Cho Oyu BC. We hike the trail and use intermediate campsites along the way. ABC is a comfortable and well-equipped home for the next few weeks. Each climber will have their own comfortable individual tent with mattress. We will gather in our warm triple-skin heated and carpeted dining room for meals, and a separate, similarly outfitted communication and meeting tent with full internet facilities. Here you can chill with fellow climbers, watch movies, check email, and stay in touch with home.

In addition, it has become a climbing tradition in the Himalayas for all groups to conduct a small Buddhist ceremony (puja) to offer thanks to the mountain, and to ask it for safe passage through its environment. As we get ready, we will alternately rest and climb, giving ourselves the preparation necessary for the best chance of success.

Climb (approx. 2 weeks spent above Advanced base camp)

After we settle in at ABC, we will proceed with checking and testing all of our climbing equipment before our first rotation through the higher camps. Our rotations will include spending nights progressively higher on the mountain as we climb and familiarise ourselves with the route. Meanwhile, our Sherpas will set up and stock higher camps (C1-C3) with essential supplies needed for the next month of climbing.

Once we are well-acclimatised and our camps are set, we will take some extra time to rest up at ABC, before going for the summit!



Day 1 Arrive in Kathmandu

A Himalayan Ascent representative will collect you from the airport. It's a free day to recover from your international flight, and to meet your guides and team. Later in the evening, there will be a group briefing and welcome group dinner.

Day 2 In Kathmandu

This is a free day for you prepare and check through equipment with your guides. There will be time to rent/buy anything else if needed. We'll organise your visa for Tibet at the Embassy. Meanwhile, any spare time you can sight see some of the many World Heritage sites Kathmandu has to offer.

Day 3-4 Drive Kathmandu to Nyalam (3750m)

Together with the rest of your team, you will board jeeps and start the drive to the Tibetan border at Kodari. It will take us 6 days to drive to BC, and along the way we will stay in lodges, taking a couple of extra days to let ourselves adjust to the high altitude of the Tibetan Plateau. The first night we will stay in the border town of Zhangmu (2300m). We continue on the next day through a series of narrow river gorges up to Nyalam.

Day 5 Acclimatisation day in Nyalam

It is critical to the success of an expedition like this to let our bodies gradually acclimatise to the altitude. This will be the first of several rest and acclimatisation days we will take along the way to foster this process. We will spend the day hiking up nearby ridges fluttering with prayer flags to catch a glimpse of Shishapangma.

Day 6-7 Drive Nyalam to Tingri, and acclimatisation in Tingri (4300m)

The next day we will continue onto Tingri. We take it easy here as we spend an extra day acclimatising, with fabulous views of the northern Himalayas from the town. Cho Oyu will be the most impressive peak on the horizon.

Day 8-9 Drive Tingri to Cho Oyu BC, and acclimatisation in BC (4800m)

From Tingri, we will drive along a bumpy track south to the end of the road at JCho Oyu BC. We will spend the next day adjusting to the altitude and camp, and getting our loads ready for yaks to carry up the next day.

Day 10-11 Trek to Advanced BC (5650m)

Followed by a train of yaks carrying the expedition's supplies, we will trek up a long valley to Advance Base Camp. This is when the time we have taken to acclimatise will really pay off. We will break the journey over 2 days and spend these nights in intermediate camps.

Day 12-16 Rest, acclimatisation and puja at ABC

Once we're settled into our home for the next few days at ABC, we'll rest and allow our bodies to acclimatise. This is also a time for conducting final gear checks and inspecting equipment. Our Sherpas guides will be establishing camps higher on the mountain in preparation for our climb rotations. Tibetan locals and our Sherpa guides have a strong spiritual relationship with the mountains, so in respect and to honour Cho Oyu, a local lama will perform a puja to wish us success and safety.

Day 17-25 Rotations to Camp 1 (6400m) and Camp 2 (7000m)

We begin our first forays on the mountain with a series of climbs: half way to Camp 1, then to Camp 1 and eventually to Camp 2. Between climbs we will return to base camp to rest or we will sleep at the higher camps to continue improving our acclimatisation physiology. The route between ABC and Camp 1 is a steep climb from the terminal moraine of the glacier, then up on the moraine to a snow shoulder. The next section, Camp 1 to 2, is the hardest on the mountain. We will follow the snow ridge to ice cliffs and climb up a steep 50m ice cliff at 6600m. This is a strenuous climb so be prepared! Once up the ice cliff, we wander between crevasses to camp at 7000m.



Day 26-27 Rest in BC

It is important to rest at a lower altitude before our final push to Camp 3 and the summit. This allows your muscles to recover with higher oxygen levels and improved nutrition from the base camp kitchen. Also relax your mind, climbing a mountain is both a physical and mental challenge. Take this time to reset your mind to prepare you for the mental challenges ahead above 8000m.

Day 28-32 Climb to Camp 3 (7400m) and Summit Cho Oyu

Finally, when the conditions are right we will progress back up the mountain, sleeping at Camp 1 and 2 before finally pushing up to Camp 3. Located just below a rock band a short distance from Camp 2, the route to Camp 3 is relatively straight forward. However, with increasing altitude each step is an effort! Camp 3 overlooks the Tibetan plateau to the north and the peaks of Nepal to the south. Summit day starts early climbing first up the rock band and then the summit's back slopes. We climb up the 40° slope to the summit, when conditions are good, the last stage climb can take 2 hr to reach summit glory! From here the view offers a wonderful vista including Everest, Lhotse, Nuptse, Ama dablam and Gaurishankar. On our descent we will drop back to Camp 3 for the night, and then Camp 1 before reaching base camp.

Day 33-34 Pack up ABC, trek to BC and drive to Tingri

With the summit complete, we pack up ABC and prepare for the journey home. We trek back across the glacier to base camp and load jeeps to take us to Tingri.

Day 35-36 Drive Tingri to Kathmandu

It's the familiar road journey back to Kathmandu with a stop at Zhangmu, our last Tibetan town before re-entering Nepal. Once in Kathmandu, you can enjoy and share your excitement for climbing the world's 6th highest mountain with friends. We will have a celebratory dinner with everyone!

Day 37 Depart Kathmandu

Time to depart crazy Kathmandu to friends and family at home. We'll see you on your next Himalayan adventure.

OTHER OPTIONS

Optional limited services available:

- Advanced Base camp only service (no climbing Sherpas or serviced higher camps)
- Full service with limited oxygen

Contact us for cost details regarding these options.





WHY HIMALAYAN ASCENT?

Himalayan Ascent is owned and managed by local Nepalese guides Sumit Joshi and Lakpa Sherpa. With more than 40 years of guiding experience between the pair across the Himalayas in Nepal, Tibet, India, Pakistan and Bhutan, Himalayan Ascent know the Himalayas, its challenges, people and mountains.

As avid rock climbers with a passion for the mountains, Sumit and Lakpa have led numerous expeditions to Everest, Lhotse, K2, Broad Peak, Cho Oyu, Manaslu and Ama Dablam. Raised in the outdoor wonderland of the Solukhumbu, the Himalayan Ascent difference is a guiding and support team of personnel who are intimately familiar with the Himalayas, who actively enjoy the outdoors and love sharing the experience with others. With a growing reputation for providing affordable, international standard complete guiding service for challenging treks in remote areas or demanding 8000m expeditions, Himalayan Ascent has the experience to deliver the type of service that's desired by international outdoor adventurers.





WHY HIMALAYAN ASCENT TO CHO OYU?

Himalayan Ascent runs small sized expeditions on Cho Oyu. You'll get to know your Sherpa guides and team mates personally. Building a good rapport with your team is critical for summit success. Our Sherpa guides are formally trained through the Nepal Mountain Guides Association and some are internationally accredited. We have a reputation for having the best managed and most comfortable base camp, and a camp cook known for making the best pizzas. Want to speak to our past clients? Contact us for the contact details of our previous Cho Oyu clients.



OTHER INFORMATION

SLEEP AND FOOD

Whilst on the drive to base camp, you'll sleep in local lodges. These provide basic accommodation. Lodge kitchens cater for continental and local tastes. Internet cafes are available along the route.

You'll end up spending a fair bit of time in base camp as you rest in between acclimatisation trips and wait for a suitable summit window. We provide a comfortable, healthy environment at base camp so that you can focus on getting prepared for your summit push. Our base camp cook, Rabin Shrestha, cooks delicious, high-quality meals.

Your Kathmandu accommodation is a mid-range 3.5 star hotel, but we can adjust according to your budget (i.e. budget to 5-star). Note that meals in Kathmandu are not included in the cost. Plan for USD 10-15 per meal on these days.

VISAS

Nepalese tourist visas can be obtained directly at the immigration department of Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. Bring at least 2 passport sized photos, a copy of your passport and USD 100 cash for a 90-day multiple entry tourist visa. You can also prearrange a visa from your nearest Nepalese consulate. The Chinese visa for Tibet will be arranged by Himalayan Ascent upon arrival in Kathmandu.

STAYING HEALTHY

It's vitally important to protect your health on a Cho Oyu expedition, and Himalayan Ascent Director, Sumit Joshi, is an experienced high-altitude medical provider who has trained under legendary high-altitude practitioner, Dr. Jim Duff. Sumit's knowledge is an invaluable resource, especially higher up on the mountain, without such easy access to base camp ER facilities.

Our staff are also well-trained in all aspects of hygiene, to ensure that you don't come down with a stomach bug the day before you leave base camp for the summit. Having a smaller team also assists in this regard.

TIBETAN CULTURE

The native people of Tibet are devote buddhists, and they practice a type of Buddhism similar to the high altitude ethnic groups of Nepal (e.g. Sherpa, Mustang). The culture of Tibetans is different from ethnic Han Chinese who also now inhabit this land. Tibetans are spiritual people and their quiet traditional way of life (farming, nomadic, dress) can be appreciated during the journey to base camp.

EXPERIENCED SHERPA GUIDES

Our Sherpa guides are passionate climbers who live and breathe their sport – i.e. they are not farmers who moonlight as climbers during climbing season. Our entire team have graduated from the Khumbu Climbing School, and train new guides during its winter session. One of them, Jangbu Sherpa, is now a fully-qualified UIAGM guide.

SMALL COHESIVE TEAM

Cho Oyu is a big mountain. Himalayan Ascent runs small expeditions with a supporting number of Sherpa guides. By having a small team of climbers, we are able to move more efficiently on the mountain, and we have the capacity to allow input from team members regarding decision making. You'll get to know everyone, both fellow climbers and Sherpas, intimately throughout the course of the expedition. With Himalayan Ascent, your climbing Sherpa will guide you throughout your rotations, so by summit push time, you'll practically be family!



CALIBRE OF TEAM MATES

When you're climbing Cho Oyu, you don't want to be in a team with a climber who doesn't have the necessary skills to tackle the mountain, nor the personality traits that might make spending 1.5 months with them extremely difficult! We require all our climbers to have a solid climbing resume, preferably with a 7000m expedition already under their belt. This ensures to us that you're prepared to face the extreme weather challenges that can sometimes affect Cho Oyu expeditions. High-altitude mountaineering has some associated discomforts, so we also look for personalities with an easy-going and flexible nature to facilitate everyone's tolerance at living at high altitude. Our small teams are carefully chosen to ensure that they are suitably compatible and experienced.

CLIMATE

During the journey to base camp, the weather will be dry and cold, reaching 25oC in the day and 0oC at night. In base camp (above 5000m), day temperatures can range 10oC-15oC. Nights are cool and can drop to -10oC. Above 7000m, temperatures will range from -40oC to -10oC at night.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Familiarity and comfort using your personal equipment is paramount to summit success. We recommend that you test drive your equipment before joining this expedition, ideally on a 7000m expedition. Keeping feet and hands warm in reliable gear during storms above 8000m will make or break your Cho Oyu dreams. This is a list of recommended items you should bring with you. Please email us about specific brands or models we know works well on 8000m peaks.

There are a number of branded mountaineering equipment stores now open in Kathmandu. To save some check-in luggage allowance, contact us about what's available locally for purchase.

Head:

- Baseball cap
- Balaclava (comfortable tight-fitting, which covers as much skin as possible)
- Warm polar fleece or wool hat (beanie)
- Glacier glasses (category 4 lens, must wrap around your face well)
- Ski goggles (snug fit with good ventilation and anti-fog)
- Headlamp X 2 (bright LED with powerful beam) and plenty of extra batteries
- Climbing helmet (adjustable, climbing-specific)

Hands:

- Gloves (snug fitting wind stopper, and a few pairs of thin liners)
- Big Mountain gloves (Gore Tex with removable liner, warmest available)
- Big Mountain mittens (warm and should fit over your wind stopper gloves, must be able to operate a Jumar wearing them)

Feet:

- Liner socks (4 pairs)
- Hiking socks (4 pairs)
- Warm mountain socks (4 pairs)
- Down booties
- Base camp shoes (comfortable, waterproof and warm)
- Hiking shoes (good low to mid-cut, Gore-Tex lined)
- Light-weight mountaineering boots (e.g. leather mountaineering boot for acclimatisation climbs up to Camp 2)
- 8000m mountaineering boots (integrated gaiter, double boot with warm insulation)



Upper Body:

- Base layers (breathable and moisture wicking, few different weights, e.g. silk weight, mid-weight and expedition weight)
- Warm jacket (fleece or polarguard)
- Softshell jacket (with wind stopping properties)
- Gore-Tex jacket (breathable waterproof with good hood that fits over a climbing helmet)
- Synthetic fill Jacket (e.g. primaloft)
- Down suit (comfortable fit 8000m down suit made by a well known brand)
- Down jacket (800 fill, lightweight with hood)
- Belay device (easy to use and lightweight)
- Prussik cord (about 8 meters of 6mm and 5 meters of 4mm)
- Ice Axe (for alpine use and right length for your height)
- Crampons (semi auto with heel bail, good anti-balling system and steel)
- Jumar (large handle to fit your glove hand)
- Trekking Poles (lightweight with good snow basket)

Legs:

- Base layer (breathable and moisture wicking, mid-weight and expedition weight)
- Soft shell pants (comfortable for everyday wear)
- Gore-Tex pants (heavy duty with reinforced crampon patches and waterproof zippers)
- Insulated pants (down or primaloft)
- Shorts (quick dry)

Equipment:

- Small day pack for trekking and city use (comfortable, 15-20L)
- Backpack (50-70L, fitted for your back length and internal frame)
- Duffle bags to transport your gear to Nepal
- Sleeping pads (full length, insulated inflatable and closed cell foam pads with repair kit)
- Sleeping bag X 2, -20oC to -40oC rated (800+ goose down fill, correct length for your height, one for base camp and one for higher camp)
- Harness (light weight alpine with belay loop and gear loop)
- Carabineers (4 screw gate and 4 snap gate)

Plus: normal city clothes, trekking clothes, small personal first aid kit, water bottles, pee bottles, pocket knife, cigarette lighter, pad locks for the duffle, scarf (bandana and buffs), underwear (avoid cotton), Ziplock bags, garbage bags to use as waterproof liner, different size stuff sacks, sunscreens (heavy duty), lip balms, toiletries, snacks to last two months and entertainment items (e.g. music, books, camera, phone with solar power charging system).

Travel documents: passport, Nepal visa (multiple entry 90 days), passport photos, copy of your travel insurance and photocopies of passport.



HIMALAYAN ASCENT



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