

Earthbound Expeditions

Gurla Mandata Expedition

30 days, from US$8,397 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
30 days	**No limit**	**Tibet**

Gurla Mandata Expedition Overview

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The Gurla Mandata massif is part of the western Himalaya and lies in Burang (Purang) county in western Tibet. The sacred Mount Kailash lies close by to the north.
Local people call the mountain Namo Nanyi, meaning "Fairy's Peak". It has six ridges. The west ridge is fan-shaped and runs from north to south, and the eroded east ridge forms very steep cliffs.

The holy Lake Mansarovar and Langa Tso also lie to the north.

Gurla Mandata was first climbed in 1985 by a Sino-Japanese expedition. This 7,000-metre peak has been climbed only six times since the first ascent, even though the first attempt was made as early as 1902. The ascent follows the northern slope by way of the Zalompa glacier. The route is relatively safe: it crosses the left side of the glacier to reach the plateau below the summit ridge. Base camp is at the foot of the glacier at 5,600 metres.

The views below are excellent, with Lake Mansarovar and Lake Rakshastal on the dry Tibetan plateau and Mount Kailash behind them.

Note: the Tibetan border has been closed since 2020. We hope it will reopen for Tibet tours from 2023. Please contact us for details.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

Welcome to Nepal. One of our representatives will meet you at Kathmandu airport and transfer you to your hotel. After check-in, you have free time to rest until the evening, when we meet for a short briefing on the Gurla Mandata Expedition. Overnight at the hotel.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: None

Day 2

Kathmandu sightseeing

We spend two full days touring the Kathmandu Valley and its main UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Pashupatinath is a Hindu pilgrimage site where you can see traditional Hindu cremations. Swayambhunath is an ancient Buddhist stupa in the Kathmandu Valley, home to many monkeys and therefore also known as the Monkey Temple. It also has good views over the valley. Boudhanath, one of the largest Buddhist stupas in the world, is a centre of Tibetan Buddhism, where we can visit monasteries and see monks chanting and people walking around the stupa. Finally, Patan Durbar Square is a medieval royal palace area in Patan, also known as the city of fine arts, with fine examples of metal and stone carving dating back to the 14th century and traditional Nepali architecture. Overnight at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

Drive to Zhangmu

We leave Kathmandu early in the morning and drive towards the Tibetan border, passing villages, terraced fields and fine scenery on the way. At the border, we complete immigration formalities and then drive up to the town of Zhangmu. Over the following nights, we stay in hotels in several villages.

Altitude: 2,300 m On foot: None, 6–7 hr drive Night: Hotel, Zhangmu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Rest day and preparation for base camp

After several days of driving and trekking, we rest and prepare for the expedition at the Gurla Mandata base camp. This preparation is essential before the climb begins. Our team organises everything for the coming days and helps you prepare mentally for the ascent. Overnight at the camp.

Altitude: 5,600 m On foot: Optional 2–3 hrs Night: Tented camp, Gurla Mandhata Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Climbing period

Days 9 to 20 are spent climbing Gurla Mandata. The climbing period is physically and mentally demanding. The summit of Gurla Mandata is 7,694 metres high. It was first climbed in 1985 by a Sino-Japanese expedition. The route is relatively safe: it crosses the left side of the glacier to reach the plateau below the summit ridge. The views below are excellent, with Lake Mansarovar and Lake Rakshastal on the dry Tibetan plateau and Mount Kailash behind them.

Altitude: 7,694 m at the summit On foot: 10–12 hrs on summit day Night: Tented camp, the high camps Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Return to Gurla Mandata base camp

On day 21, after the summit of Gurla Mandata, we return to base camp at the foot of the glacier at 5,600 metres. Overnight at the camp.

Altitude: 5,600 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Tented camp, Gurla Mandhata Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek around Mount Kailash

After the climb of Gurla Mandata, we trek around the holy Mount Kailash. The main highlights are Lake Mansarovar, the snow-covered Mount Kailash, the Tibetan plateau and the many monasteries along the way.

Altitude: 5,630 m at the Dolma La On foot: 6–9 hrs a day Night: Tented camp, Kailash kora Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Drive to the Nepal to Tibet border

After three days visiting the holy Mount Kailash, Lake Mansarovar and other religious sites, we drive towards the border between Nepal and Tibet, passing many villages. Overnight at a guesthouse on the way.

Altitude: 4,640 m On foot: None, 9–10 hr drive Night: Guesthouse, Saga Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Drive to Kathmandu and farewell dinner

On day 29, we leave the Himalaya and drive back to Kathmandu. In the evening, we hold a farewell dinner at a cultural restaurant in the valley to mark the end of the expedition. This is your last night in Nepal, at a hotel in Kathmandu.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, 10–12 hr drive Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Departure

Your Gurla Mandata Expedition ends today. We will take you to the international airport 2 to 3 hours before your flight home.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- All airport pick-ups and drop-offs, and services in Kathmandu
- 3, 4 or 5-star hotel accommodation in Kathmandu, depending on the package you choose
- Kathmandu Valley sightseeing with guides and entrance fees
- Tibet visa and permit
- Tents, sleeping mats and camping equipment
- Kitchen, toilet, dining and shower tents. (We normally provide twin-share tents. If you would like a single tent, please let us know in advance.)
- All entrance fees in Tibet
- All staff, with their insurance (cook, kitchen assistant and climbing Sherpa)
- Transport by four-wheel drive (latest-model Land Cruiser, 4 people per vehicle)
- Truck for luggage and equipment
- Gamow bag (portable altitude chamber)
- Oxygen

Not included

- International airfare
- Bar bills (soft drinks, beer, water and similar) and other personal expenses
- Nepal re-entry visa (for NRIs, Europeans and Americans)
- Emergency rescue charges, if required
- Tips for staff
- Photography fees, where applicable in Tibet

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/gurla-mandata-expedition-30-days