

Earthbound Expeditions

Island Peak Climbing

21 days, from US$2,697 per person

Duration
21 days

Grade
Alpine PD

Max altitude
6,189 m

Start and end
Kathmandu

On the trail
5 to 7 hours a day

Best season
Apr to May, Oct to Nov

Accommodation
Teahouses and tents

Meals
All meals on the trek

Group size
Up to 12

Getting there
Fly to Lukla

Island Peak Climbing Overview

An introduction to Himalayan mountaineering, combining the Everest trail with a guided ascent of Imja Tse (Island Peak).

Trip overview

Island Peak, Imja Tse in Nepali, is a 6,189 m trekking peak at the head of the Imja valley, and it is the usual first Himalayan summit. It is a real climb, not a walk: the summit day involves fixed ropes, a jumar, crampons, an ice axe and a headwall of about 100 m at over 6,000 m, and it starts at around one in the morning. It is also achievable for a fit person with no previous climbing experience, which is why it is the most common first Himalayan peak.

Climbing skills and training

No climbing skills are needed in advance. The itinerary includes a full training day at base camp with your climbing Sherpa: rope work, ascending with a jumar, abseiling, walking in crampons and self-arrest with an ice axe. If you have done a Scottish winter route or an alpine course, you will already know much of this; if you have not, it is the most useful day of the trip. Fitness and altitude tolerance cannot be taught in a day, and the two weeks of trekking beforehand are for building these.

Why the trip takes twenty days

You acclimatise to 6,189 m by first walking the Everest Base Camp route. The itinerary follows the standard route up the Khumbu, with rest days at Namche and Dingboche, before turning east into the Imja valley to Chhukung and base camp. Shorter Island Peak itineraries leave out this approach and have lower summit success rates as a result.

Summit success rate

Fit, well-acclimatised groups on a twenty-day itinerary reach the summit in most cases, but not all. Climbers are turned back by weather at the headwall, crowding on the fixed rope in peak season, or exhaustion on reaching the crampon point after fourteen days of trekking. Turning back below the summit is a normal outcome, and your Sherpa's decision is final.

Key highlights of the Island Peak Climbing

- Summit Island Peak (6,189 m)
- Full climbing and rope training
- Acclimatisation on the Everest Base Camp route
- IFMGA-certified climbing guides

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
2	Kathmandu valley, and a gear check	-	-	1,400 m
3	Fly to Lukla, walk to Phakding	3–4 hrs	-	2,651 m
4	Phakding to Namche Bazaar	6–7 hrs	-	3,440 m

5	Namche, acclimatisation day	2–4 hrs	-	3,440 m
6	Namche to Tengboche	5–6 hrs	-	3,860 m
7	Tengboche to Dingboche	5–6 hrs	-	4,410 m
8	Dingboche, acclimatisation day	4–5 hrs	-	4,410 m
9	Dingboche to Lobuche	5–6 hrs	-	4,940 m
10	Lobuche to Base Camp, sleep Gorak Shep	7–8 hrs	-	5,364 m
11	Kala Patthar at dawn, down to Dingboche	8–9 hrs	-	5,545 m
12	Dingboche to Chhukung	3–4 hrs	-	4,730 m
13	Chhukung to Island Peak base camp	3–4 hrs	-	5,087 m
14	Training day: ropes, jumar, crampons, axe	-	-	5,087 m
15	Summit day, and back to base camp	12–14 hrs	-	6,189 m
16	Reserve day for weather	-	-	5,087 m
17	Down to Pangboche	6–7 hrs	-	3,930 m
18	Pangboche to Namche	7–8 hrs	-	2,840 m
19	Namche to Lukla	-	-	-
20	Fly to Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
21	Fly home	-	-	-

Day 1

Arrive in Kathmandu

Arrive in Kathmandu, where an Earthbound Expeditions representative meets you and transfers you to a 3-star hotel.

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

Day 2

Kathmandu sightseeing

A pre-trek briefing and introduction to your guide, followed by a half-day sightseeing tour of the World Heritage Sites.

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

Day 3

Fly to Lukla (2,840 m) and trek to Phakding (2,610 m)

Take an early morning flight to Lukla, with views of the Himalayan peaks. Descend and trek to Phakding for the night.

Altitude: 2,610 m On foot: 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Phakding Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek from Phakding to Namche Bazaar (3,440 m)

The trail climbs to Namche Bazaar, the gateway to the Everest region. You may see Everest for the first time about halfway up the climb.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Acclimatisation day in Namche Bazaar, hike towards Thame (3,800 m)

An acclimatisation day with a hike towards Thame and Sangbuche, with good views of the snow peaks, before returning to Namche.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: Optional 2–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Trek to Tengboche (3,860 m)

Trek through Khumjung to Tengboche monastery, which has panoramic views of the Himalaya.

Altitude: 3,860 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Tengboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Trek to Dingboche (4,410 m)

The trail crosses the Imja Khola on the way to Dingboche, passing terraced fields and pastures where yaks graze.

Altitude: 4,410 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dingboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Acclimatisation day in Dingboche (4,410 m)

An acclimatisation day at Dingboche with optional hikes. The views include Lhotse and Ama Dablam.

Altitude: 4,410 m On foot: Optional 4–5 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dingboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Trek to Lobuche (4,940 m)

The trail climbs through a grassy valley towards the Khumbu Glacier. Overnight at Lobuche.

Altitude: 4,940 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lobuche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Trek from Lobuche to Gorak Shep (5,164 m) and Everest Base Camp

Walk along the Khumbu Glacier to Gorak Shep, then continue to Everest Base Camp in the afternoon. Return to Gorak Shep for the night, the highest overnight stop of the trek.

Altitude: 5,164 m On foot: 7–8 hrs Night: Teahouse, Gorak Shep Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Hike to Kala Patthar (5,545 m) at dawn and trek to Dingboche

An early start up Kala Patthar for the sunrise view of Everest and the surrounding peaks, followed by a long descent past Lobuche to Dingboche.

Altitude: 4,410 m On foot: 8–9 hrs Night: Teahouse, Dingboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Trek from Dingboche to Chhukung (4,730 m)

A short walk up the Imja valley, below the wall that links Nuptse and Lhotse, to Chhukung.

Altitude: 4,730 m On foot: 3–4 hrs Night: Teahouse, Chhukung Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

Trek from Chhukung to Island Peak Base Camp (5,087 m)

About four hours along the Imja Khola to base camp. The crew put up the tents and check the climbing equipment.

Altitude: 5,087 m On foot: 3–4 hrs Night: Tented camp, Island Peak Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14

Training day at base camp

A day of rope training with the climbing guide: fixed-line technique, the jumar, crampons and the ice axe, and a practice of the descent.

Altitude: 5,087 m On foot: Training, 3–4 hrs Night: Tented camp, Island Peak Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15

Summit Island Peak (6,189 m) and return to base camp

Start at around one or two in the morning, climbing over rock and snow to the glacier, then up fixed ropes on the headwall to the summit ridge. Return to base camp in the afternoon.

Altitude: 6,189 m at the summit On foot: 12–14 hrs Night: Tented camp, Island Peak Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16

Reserve day for weather

This day is kept for a second summit attempt if weather or conditions prevent the first. If it is not needed, it allows an easier walk out.

Altitude: 5,087 m On foot: None, spare day Night: Tented camp, Island Peak Base Camp Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 17

Trek from base camp to Pangboche (3,985 m)

Descend the Imja valley past Dingboche to Pangboche and its old monastery.

Altitude: 3,985 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Pangboche Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 18

Trek from Pangboche to Namche Bazaar (3,440 m)

Walk past Tengboche and down to the river, then climb back up to Namche.

Altitude: 3,440 m On foot: 7–8 hrs Night: Teahouse, Namche Bazaar Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 19

Trek from Namche Bazaar to Lukla (2,840 m)

The last day of walking: down through the pine forest to the Dudh Koshi, across the suspension bridges and up the final climb to Lukla, where you have a celebration dinner with the crew.

Altitude: 2,840 m On foot: 6–7 hrs Night: Teahouse, Lukla Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 20

Fly to Kathmandu

Fly back to Kathmandu. In the evening there is a cultural show and dinner.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 21

Departure

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

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

What's included

- Airport transfers and ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits and national park fees
- Meals as per the itinerary

Not included

- International flights
- Travel and rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips and personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Permits and other costs

Permit	Fee	Issued by
Sagarmatha National Park entry permit. SAARC nationals pay NPR 1,500. Children under ten go free.	NPR 3,390, about $25	Kathmandu, or at Monjo on the way in
Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality permit. Covers the first four weeks. NPR 2,500 after that.	NPR 2,000, about $15	Lukla, on arrival
TIMS card. Discontinued in the Khumbu in 2018 and replaced by the municipality permit above. It is still listed on some websites. You do not need one for this trek.	Not required	-
Island Peak climbing permit. Imja Tse is an NMA Group B trekking peak. The fee is seasonal and the permit is issued against a named climber and a named climbing leader.	$250 in spring, $125 in autumn	Nepal Mountaineering Association, through the agency
Insurance naming mountaineering. You need cover to 6,500 m including mountaineering and helicopter rescue, and we check the wording of your policy. Ordinary trekking insurance excludes roped climbing, and this is the most common problem we find with insurance for this trip.	Your own, $200 to $320	-

Other cost	Amount	Note
Island Peak climbing permit	$250 spring, $125 autumn	At NMA rates. $70 in winter and summer, when we do not run this trip

Sagarmatha National Park permit	$25	NPR 3,390
Khumbu Pasang Lhamu permit	$15	NPR 2,000, the local municipality permit
Lukla flight, both ways	$350–420	About $500 via Manthali in peak season
Climbing Sherpa, one per two climbers	$400–600	For the climbing days, plus a summit bonus
Group climbing kit and fixed rope	$150–250 a head	Rope, ice screws, snow bars, and the team that fixes the ropes on the headwall
Personal climbing kit hire	$120–200	Boots, crampons, axe, harness and jumar. Hired in Kathmandu if you do not have your own
Base camp tents and kitchen	$180–260	Four nights camped at 5,087 m with a cook
Teahouses and food on the trek	$30–45 a day	For fourteen days
Travel insurance to 6,500 m	$200–320	Must cover mountaineering and helicopter rescue. Standard trekking cover is not sufficient
Tips, crew and summit bonus	$300–450	Per climber. A bonus for the Sherpa is customary after a successful summit

Packing list

Weight limits and climbing equipment

Your porter carries a strict maximum of 20 kg, shared between two trekkers. The Lukla flight allows 15 kg and baggage is weighed. In addition, boots, crampons, ice axe and harness are heavy and must be carried up. We provide the duffel bag, sleeping bag, down jacket and group climbing equipment.

Head and eyes

- Sun hat with a brim, and a warm hat that covers your ears
- Two buffs or neck gaiters
- Sunglasses, category 3 or 4. Snow glare at this altitude is strong
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sunscreen SPF 50 and lip balm with sun protection

Clothing

- Three or four merino or synthetic base layers, not cotton
- Two mid layers, one fleece and one light insulated jacket
- Down jacket. We provide one; bring your own if you feel the cold at night
- Waterproof jacket and trousers that pack small

- Two pairs of trekking trousers, one lined
- Underwear for four or five days, washed along the way

Hands and feet

- Liner gloves and insulated outer gloves or mittens
- Trekking boots with ankle support, already worn in. This is essential
- Four pairs of wool trekking socks
- Camp shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Gaiters, if you are travelling in winter or early spring

Bags

- Duffel bag for the porter, 20 kg maximum. We provide one
- Daypack, 30 to 35 litres, with a rain cover
- Dry bags or thick liners. Nothing stays dry for long on a Himalayan trail

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag rated to -15°C. We provide one
- Silk or cotton liner, for warmth and hygiene
- Earplugs. Teahouse walls are made of plywood

Health

- Personal first aid kit: blister plasters, tape, painkillers, rehydration salts
- Diamox, if your doctor agrees, plus any medicines you take regularly
- Water purification: tablets, a filter or a SteriPen
- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Throat lozenges. Almost everyone develops a dry cough at high altitude

Papers and money

- Passport valid for six months, plus two photocopies
- Four passport photographs for permits
- Travel insurance certificate showing helicopter cover to 6,000 m
- $400 to $700 in small notes. The last cash machine is at Namche Bazaar

Climbing equipment, which can be hired in Kathmandu

- Double or insulated mountaineering boots that take a step-in crampon. Trekking boots are not suitable
- Crampons, fitted to those boots in Kathmandu before you leave, not at base camp
- Ice axe, harness, jumar, belay device, two locking carabiners and a helmet
- Mountaineering gloves plus a warm spare pair. On summit morning it is around minus twenty with wind
- A reliable headtorch and spare batteries, because you set off at one in the morning
- Category 4 glacier glasses and a spare pair. Snow blindness on the Imja glacier is a real risk

Getting there and back

The flights and long drives on this itinerary, and what happens if one is delayed or cancelled.

Flights from Kathmandu or Ramechhap

Outside the two busiest periods of the year, the flight leaves from Kathmandu and takes about 35 minutes. For most of March to May and late September to November, air traffic control moves Lukla departures to Manthali airport at Ramechhap to reduce congestion at Kathmandu. This means a drive of four to five hours, leaving Kathmandu at around two in the morning, followed by a twenty-minute flight. The trek is the same, but the night before is much shorter. We tell you which applies to your dates before you book.

Baggage allowance

The allowance is 15 kg in total: 10 kg checked baggage and 5 kg hand baggage. Excess baggage is charged at about $1.50 per kilo and the limit is enforced, because the aircraft is a nineteen-seat Twin Otter or Dornier and the runway is 527 metres long and sloped. Anything you do not need on the trek can be stored free of charge at our office in Kathmandu.

Flight delays

Lukla is closed by cloud several times a month in every season. Losing one day is common and losing two is not unusual. The reserve day on day 16, which is also the weather day for the summit, is for this purpose. If the flight is cancelled for more than three days, we change the itinerary to a comparable trek at lower altitude rather than shorten this one, at no extra charge. If you prefer to fly by helicopter on the day, it costs around $500 per seat and we can usually arrange it within a few hours.

Allow a spare day before your flight home

Book an international flight that leaves at least one clear day after your scheduled return to Kathmandu. This is the least expensive way to protect your trip against delays.

Accommodation

Teahouse nights

Most of the trip is spent in teahouses on the Everest trail. These are family-run lodges with one dining room heated by a single stove, and simple twin rooms with foam mattresses and thin walls. Bring a sleeping bag. Lower down, at Phakding, Namche and Lukla, many rooms have a private bathroom. Higher up, at Dingboche, Lobuche, Gorak Shep and Chhukung, bathrooms are shared, and hot showers, charging and wifi are paid for separately.

Tent nights

At Island Peak Base Camp, at about 5,000 m, you sleep in tents. The crew set up sleeping tents, a dining tent, a kitchen tent and a toilet tent, and the cook provides hot meals and boiled water. The training day, the night before the summit and any reserve day are spent here. It is cold, and a four-season sleeping bag is needed.

Where	Nights	Type	Room	Bathroom
Kathmandu	3	Three-star hotel	Twin or double	Private, hot water
Phakding	1	Teahouse	Twin	Private in most lodges

Namche Bazaar	3	Teahouse	Twin	Private, hot shower for a fee
Tengboche	1	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Dingboche	3	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Lobuche	1	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Gorak Shep	1	Teahouse, the highest on the route	Twin, basic	Shared, no shower
Chhukung	1	Teahouse, the last before the mountain	Twin, basic	Shared, no shower
Island Peak base camp	4	Tents. There are no buildings at base camp	Two-person tent, shared, with a foam mattress	Toilet tent. No shower; a bowl of warm water from the kitchen
Pangboche	1	Teahouse	Twin	Shared
Lukla	1	Teahouse	Twin	Private

Heating
One stove in the teahouse dining room, lit at dusk. Bedrooms are not heated, and at base camp there is only the dining tent.

Hot shower
Available up to Dingboche for a fee, heated by gas or solar power. Not available at Chhukung, Gorak Shep or base camp.

Charging
Available for a fee in the teahouse dining rooms. Not available at base camp. Bring a power bank and keep it in your sleeping bag at night.

Wi-Fi
Everest Link cards, sold by the gigabyte, work in most villages on the route. There is usually no connection at base camp.

Phone signal
Ncell and NTC cover much of the route, with patchy coverage above Dingboche. Buy a SIM card in Kathmandu.

Water
Boiled water is available in the teahouses for a fee, and from the cook at base camp. Please use this or purify your own water rather than buying bottled water.

Sleeping bag
Provided, rated to -15°C. You will use it at base camp, so bring a liner.

Base camp
Sleeping tents, a dining tent, a kitchen tent with a cook, and a toilet tent.

Meals

Meal	Time	What it is like
Breakfast	7:00 to 7:30	Porridge, Tibetan bread, eggs, chapati, pancakes, tea or coffee
Lunch	12:00 to 13:00	Dal bhat, fried rice, noodles, soup, momo, potatoes
Dinner	18:30 to 19:30	Dal bhat, pasta, thukpa, curry and rice, with soup to start. At base camp, prepared by our own cook
Tea	On arrival	Black, milk, lemon, ginger or masala, at every stop and in the dining tent at base camp
Summit day	Around 1:00	Porridge and hot drinks before you set off, with snacks and a flask on the mountain

Diet	How we manage it
Vegetarian	Easy throughout. Dal bhat is vegetarian and is the most recommended dish on the menu.
Vegan	Manageable with notice. Tell us when you book, so the guide can order ahead and suitable food can be bought for base camp.
Gluten free	Rice, dal, potatoes and eggs are safe. Bread, noodles and momo are not, and cross-contamination in a teahouse kitchen cannot be ruled out.
Halal	There is no certified halal kitchen on the route. Vegetarian food is the practical option.
Meat	Available, but we advise against it above Namche, because it has been carried up without refrigeration for several days.

A typical day

Time	What happens
6:00	Tea in your room, a bowl of warm water, and your duffel bag ready for the porter
7:00	Breakfast together
8:00	On the trail, at the guide's steady pace, which is slower than most people expect
12:00	Lunch at a teahouse on the route, about an hour
13:00	Two to four hours more, depending on the day
15:30	Arrive, tea, wash, rest
17:00	Oxygen saturation and pulse measured and recorded
18:30	Dinner, and the guide explains the plan for the next day
20:30	Bed. On summit night you get up again at midnight

Difficulty and preparation

Difficulty 5 of 5

A genuine climb at the end of a demanding trek. No climbing experience is needed, but a high level of fitness is required.

- Fourteen days of trekking on the Everest Base Camp route, reaching 5,545 m, before the climb begins.
- Summit day lasts 12 to 14 hours, starting at around one in the morning from 5,087 m.
- A glacier crossing in crampons, a fixed rope, a jumar and a headwall of about 100 m at over 6,000 m.
- Crevasses on the glacier, and a ladder crossing in some seasons. You are roped to your Sherpa.
- No previous climbing experience is needed: the training day at base camp teaches the rope work. Fitness cannot be taught in a day.

Getting ready

12 weeks before: Build endurance
Three cardio sessions a week, 45 minutes each, at a pace at which you can still hold a conversation. Walking, cycling, swimming or rowing are all suitable. This is the most important part of your preparation.

10 weeks before: Add hill walking
Replace one session with a one-hour hill walk with 300 m of ascent. Add a second strength session: squats, step-ups, lunges and calf raises. Descending puts more strain on your thigh muscles than climbing.

8 weeks before: Train with a loaded pack
Start walking with the daypack you will carry, loaded to 6 kg. Wear your trekking boots on every one of these walks. Blisters are the second most common cause of difficulty on the trek, and they can be prevented.

6 weeks before: Walk on consecutive days
One long walk of four to five hours at the weekend, followed by a second walk of two to three hours the next morning. This is the most useful training, because the trek consists of consecutive days of walking.

4 weeks before: Longest training walk
Six to seven hours with 800 m of ascent and the same descent. If you finish able to eat a meal and sleep normally, you are ready.

2 weeks before: Reduce training
Halve the amount of training but keep the same frequency. Training in the last two weeks will not improve your fitness and increases the risk of injury. Rest well instead.

Altitude and safety

You sleep at 5,087 m and climb to 6,189 m, which is higher than any other trip we offer on foot. The approach follows the Everest Base Camp route with both its rest days, and those two weeks provide all your acclimatisation: by the time you reach Chhukung, you have already slept at 5,164 m and stood at 5,545 m. The summit then adds 1,100 m of ascent in a single push on the coldest morning of the trip.

What to watch for

- A headache that does not improve with water and paracetamol
- Nausea, or no appetite when you should be hungry
- Breathlessness at rest, not only when climbing
- Poor sleep at Chhukung or base camp, or waking short of breath
- A dry cough that gets worse over a day
- Loss of coordination, which on a fixed rope ends the climb

How to prevent it

- Eat and drink well on the approach. Arriving at base camp after two weeks of eating too little is the most common reason climbers cannot continue.
- Treat the Kala Patthar day on day 11 as a test: if it went badly, tell your guide at Dingboche.
- Sleep at base camp rather than moving to a high camp, unless your Sherpa advises otherwise.
- No alcohol above Namche for the whole trip.
- Discuss Diamox with your doctor. It does not replace a gradual approach.

What we do

1. Daily health checks
Above Namche, your guide measures your oxygen saturation and pulse every evening, and every morning if you feel unwell, and records them throughout the twenty days.

2. Summit decision at Chhukung
The decision whether to attempt the summit is made at Chhukung, two days before the summit, where descending is easy. Your guide decides based on your readings, the weather and how you managed the Kala Patthar day, not on how much you want to continue.

3. Decisions on the mountain
Turnaround time, rope conditions and weather are decided by your climbing Sherpa, and the decision is final. In most seasons someone turns back at the headwall, and this is a normal outcome, not a failure.

4. Descent and helicopter evacuation
Pheriche and its Himalayan Rescue Association clinic are a day from base camp. Helicopters can reach Chhukung and base camp. The cost is $3,000 to $5,000, and the helicopter will not fly without a payment guarantee.

Weather by month

Typical conditions on this route in each month, including the months we do not run this trip.

Month	Daytime on the trail	Night-time on the trail	Night-time at base camp, 5,087 m	Conditions	Note
January	4°C	-10°C	-20°C	Hard	Clear and extremely cold. Most lodges above Dingboche are closed.
February	6°C	-8°C	-18°C	Hard	Cold and quiet, with the clearest air of the year.

March	10°C	-5°C	-15°C	Good	The season begins. Cold at night, few trekkers, and rhododendrons starting to flower at lower levels.
April	13°C	-2°C	-12°C	Best	The best month. Warm days, stable weather, and the forests below Namche are in flower.
May	15°C	1°C	-10°C	Best	The warmest walking of the year. Hazier by late May as the monsoon approaches.
June	16°C	4°C	-6°C	Hard	The monsoon arrives. Cloud, leeches at lower levels, and flights are often cancelled.
July	16°C	5°C	-5°C	We do not run it	We do not run this trek in July. The mountains are hidden and flights rarely operate.
August	16°C	5°C	-5°C	We do not run it	Similar to July. The mountains are usually hidden by cloud.
September	14°C	2°C	-8°C	Good	The monsoon clears during the month. Late September is green and clear.
October	12°C	-3°C	-14°C	Best	The busiest and most reliable month. Book several months ahead.
November	9°C	-7°C	-17°C	Best	Cold, very quiet by the end of the month, and the clearest skies of the autumn.
December	6°C	-9°C	-19°C	Hard	Clear and very cold. Possible with the right equipment, and few people on the trail.

Averages from Nepal DHM station data for the Khumbu, the same as the Everest Base Camp trek. Any week can be ten degrees either side, and summit morning on the headwall is colder again, around minus twenty with wind.

Booking and payment

How to book

Write to us and tell us about your experience. Previous climbing experience is not required, but we do ask for a previous trek at altitude, or a detailed discussion of why you believe you are ready without one.

Deposit

A deposit of thirty per cent secures your dates, and the balance is paid in cash or by card when you arrive in Kathmandu. At the same time, we ask for a copy of your passport, your insurance certificate and any dietary or medical information.

Payment

Pay by bank transfer, or by card through a secure link. Card payments carry the bank's fee of about 4 per cent, which we show you before you pay. The balance in Kathmandu can be paid in US dollars, pounds, euros or Nepali rupees.

Cancellation

If you cancel more than 30 days before departure, your deposit can be transferred to any other date or trip we run, with no time limit. Within 30 days the deposit is retained, because the permits, flights and crew have been booked. If we cancel for any reason other than weather, we refund the full amount.

Private and group departures

Both cost the same for a group of five or more. A private departure runs on your dates at your pace and can be arranged for one person; a group departure runs on the dates in the table above. Most travellers book privately, at no extra cost.

Late bookings

Book at least two months ahead, or three months for a spring departure. The climbing permit is issued in the names of the climber and the climbing leader, and the Sherpa you want is booked a season in advance.

Optional extras

Luxury lodge upgrade in the lower Khumbu

Price on request

Where the route passes one, we book a premium lodge instead of the standard teahouse. Mountain Lodges of Nepal has lodges at Lukla, Phakding, Monjo, Namche and Deboche, and Everest Summit Lodges has lodges at Lukla, Monjo, Tashinga and Pangboche. They offer warmer rooms, better beds, private bathrooms in most rooms and a quieter dining room.

There are no premium lodges above Pangboche, so the higher nights are in standard teahouses. We confirm which lodges have rooms on your dates before you book.

Frequently asked questions

Answers to the 6 questions travellers ask us most often. If your question is not here, contact us and we will answer it.

How hard is this trip?

We grade it Technical. You reach about 6,189 m, so the main challenge is the altitude rather than technical climbing. Rest days are included to help you adjust, and a good level of everyday fitness is enough. Tell us about your experience when you enquire and we will give you an honest assessment of whether the trip suits you.

When is the best time to go?

The best time to go is spring and autumn (April to May, October to November), when the weather is most settled and the views are clearest. We also run the trip outside these months on request; ask us and we will tell you what to expect.

How big are the groups?

Small. Many of our trips run for just one or two people, and we keep groups small so that you set the pace and your guide has time for everyone. You can also book the whole trip privately.

What do I need to pay to book?

A 30% deposit, about $809 on this trip, secures your place, and the balance is due before you travel. You can change your dates free of charge up to 60 days before departure.

Do I need permits, and are they included?

Yes, you need permits, and they are included. We arrange all the national park fees and trekking permits for this route, and they are included in the price. You only need a valid passport and a Nepal entry visa, which you get on arrival.

Can you tailor the itinerary?

Every itinerary can be adjusted to your dates, your pace and the time you have. If you want extra rest days, a different starting point, or to add another region, tell us and we will plan the trip around you.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/island-peak-climbing