



## Makalu Rapid Ascent Expedition Nepal



August 29 - October 7, 2016; August 28 - October 6, 2017  
\$34,950 (*land costs*)

Difficulty Level: Advanced- must be able to climb technical terrain with an alpine pack on your back. You should be comfortable with camp craft in high-altitude camps and be able to perform at a high level for multiple days in a row at altitude.



Alpenglow Expeditions is excited to return to Makalu (8,481 meters/27,825 feet), the fifth tallest mountain in the world. Makalu, a stunning 4-sided pyramid, stands isolated on the Nepali-Tibetan border, close to and easily visible from Mt. Everest and the Khumbu Valley, but far away from the common tourist treks and climbs.

For years, Makalu has seen few ascents and only non-commercial teams. The difficult and long trek into base camp was one reason for this. With the aid of pre-acclimatization and helicopters, we now avoid this trek and immediately access the stellar climbing on Makalu itself. From an Advanced Base Camp at the foot of Makalu's glaciers, we progressively place camps and ascend on Makalu's slopes.

The climbing itself is appropriate for both the experienced climber making their first 8,000 meter peak ascent, and as a follow-up ascent to busier and more popular peaks like Everest, Cho Oyu, and Lhotse. The climbing consists of easy glaciers low on the mountain, steep ice and snow climbing to the Makalu La, and, above Camp 4, a final rock ridge to the summit. Makalu is a steep and consistent climb, and in the autumn season has excellent snow coverage and low danger from hazards like icefalls, rockfall and avalanche. And with our program of utilizing oxygen above 7,000 meters (23,000 feet), and Sherpa support and fixed ropes throughout the climb, each climbing day is reasonable in length and difficulty.

The other exciting aspect of climbing Makalu is the lack of crowds. While we expect to share the mountain with other teams, they will generally be small and strong. This gives us support on the mountain in establishing the route and ropes, but avoids any overcrowding common on other 8000-meter peaks.

Despite all of these reasons that make Makalu an attainable 8000-meter peak, it should not be underestimated. We require a significant amount of experience from each of our team members to ensure that you will feel comfortable on the peak, both with your own skills and those of your teammates.

Alpenglow Expeditions ensures that the logistics, guiding and base camp staff, food, and equipment are of the absolute highest-level possible. Alpenglow's 8,000 meter peak expeditions are organized by IFMGA guide, Adrian Ballinger. Adrian is one of the most recognized guides in the Himalaya, with an impeccable safety record and ten 8,000 meter peak summits, all while guiding or rope-fixing for guided teams. Adrian has extensive experience organizing complicated logistics for large Himalayan teams (including 6 years as lead guide for one of the Himalaya's largest companies), as well as countless hours on the mountain rope-fixing with sherpa, guiding members, and assisting and organizing rescues.

Alpenglow Expeditions offers a small team, low ratio, high-end approach to 8,000 meter peak guiding. Beware of cut-rate operators on Himalayan peaks! It is not possible to offer quality staff, equipment, and food for less.

We are also the leader in offering express trips to 8,000 meter peaks, utilizing pre-acclimatization and more Sherpa and guide support than anyone else in the industry. This allows you to climb and summit Makalu quickly and safely.



## Alpenglow's Key Differences

- 3:1 maximum guide to climber ratio. All guides are IFMGA qualified or aspirants working towards finishing their certification. This is the lowest member to guide ratio in the Himalaya.
- 1:1 Sherpa to climber ratio. This ensures we have the Sherpa necessary to carry loads, set camps, and assist climbers. All of our Sherpa on Makalu have worked with us on many expeditions to peaks including Makalu, Everest and Ama Dablam.
- Experienced expedition doctor Monica Piris (12 x 8,000 meter peak expeditions) travels with the group and is in base camp and advanced base camp throughout the expedition. Dr. Piris also works with each member on his or her pre-acclimatization program.
- Swiss weather forecasts. Having a quality forecast tailored to Makalu maximizes both our safety and our summit success.
- 5 bottles of oxygen per climber. This allows us to use oxygen both climbing and sleeping while we are above Camp 2. We also climb on a higher flow than other expeditions, ensuring safety and maximizing success. Our Sherpa also climb on oxygen on summit day, which means they have more strength and comfort to focus on you and your ascent.
- Imported and local foods of the highest quality, combined with a western trained cook staff. Alpenglow has the best food on the mountain, ensuring your strength and health throughout the expedition.
- Unlimited WIFI Internet in base camp. Our focus on technology allows you to stay in touch with home and office via email, text message, and phone at no additional expense.
- Pre-acclimatization using Hypoxico Altitude Training Systems. A four-week rental is included in the expedition price, and use of the system is a requirement for joining our expedition. Contact us to discuss a more traditional "slow-acclimatization" extension to our Makalu Expedition if preferred.





## Route Description

Our climb of Makalu begins with a combination of fixed-wing and helicopter flights from Kathmandu to Makalu Base Camp (15,745 feet/4,800 meters). Whether we fly through Lukla or Tumblingtar, the views and mountain scenery are incredible. Our use of helicopters avoids a difficult and wet low-altitude trek and allows us to immediately begin acclimatization and work on the mountain itself.

After two or three days in Base Camp, organizing equipment and enjoying short walks in the valley, we move from Base Camp to Advanced Base Camp (ABC). ABC is where we spend most of our time on Makalu, and our comfortable and sunny camp, perched on a rocky dome at 18,370 feet/5,600 meters, is home to our full Alpenglow infrastructure - heated dining tents, fully stocked kitchen, heated communications and hangout tent, internet access, and much more.

After some necessary rest and training days around ABC we begin to move on the mountain itself. From ABC we climb a rocky moraine and then continue onto low-angle glacier. Just before reaching Camp 1 (20,650 feet/6,300 meters) we ascend a steeper ice and snow wall with fixed lines. On this first rotation we spend at least 2 nights in Camp 1, and during that time make an acclimatization trip across easy glacier to Camp 2 (21,650 feet/6,600 meters).

Our second acclimatization climb takes us for another night at Camp 1, and then across broad glaciated slopes to Camp 2. We spend two or more nights in Camp 2, and during that time climb to at least 23,000 feet/7,000 meters on the steep slopes that lead to the Makalu La and Camp 3. After sufficient acclimatization time, we descend to ABC for rest and to prepare for our summit push.

Our summit push begins with a climb directly to Camp 2. After a possible rest day, we put on oxygen and climb to the Makalu La and Camp 3 (24,600 feet/7,500 meters). This is a long and steep climb, and utilizing supplemental oxygen makes it significantly easier and more comfortable.

After a night utilizing oxygen at Camp 3 we make an easy traverse to Camp 4 (25,600 feet/7,800 meters) on oxygen. This short move enables us to enjoy a shorter summit day. From Camp 4 we climb moderate glacial slopes to the French Couloir. The couloir is steep and entails crossing small rock bands interspersed with snow climbing. From the top of the couloir we follow the exposed ridge on rock past the false summit and to the top of the world's fifth tallest mountain. The views from the summit are unparalleled, and range from Kanchenjunga in the east to Shishapangma in the west, with countless smaller peaks in between.

From the summit we descend to Camp 2 where we spend the night, and then continue down to ABC to celebrate our summit, rest, and prepare for our return by helicopter and fixed-wing plane to Kathmandu and home.



## Makalu Expedition Itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal (4,600 feet/1,400 meters).</b> We transfer to our hotel, and begin the process of getting over jetlag. (Monday)
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Explore Kathmandu.</b> Today we explore some of Kathmandu's most famous sites. These include Swyambunath (the Monkey Temple), Pashupati (Nepal's largest Hindu temple), Boudanath (Kathmandu's most important Buddhist temple) and the old city's original central square, Durbar. We also have our first team meeting, and organize our equipment.
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Fly Kathmandu (4,600 feet/1,400 meters) to Makalu Base Camp (15,745 feet/4,800 meters).</b> Depending on weather and mountain conditions, we may begin our journey with a fixed-wing flight to Tumlingtar or Lukla. From there we will load our helicopter, and follow the Barun Valley past small villages and thick forests to our lower Base Camp. Makalu Base Camp is in a wide valley with unbelievable views of the entire mountain, and our comfortable camp is pre-established by our team of Sherpa ready for our arrival.
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Rest Makalu Base Camp.</b> We take the day to get used to life at altitude, eat the fantastic food of our head cook, Tashi Ram Basnet, and organize all of our porter loads.
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Rest Makalu Base Camp.</b> Today we do a day hike near base camp, enjoying views of Makalu and its glaciers. We return to base camp for the night.
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Trek Makalu Base Camp (15,745 feet/4,800 meters) to Makalu Advanced Base Camp (18,370 feet/5,600 meters).</b> We leave the valley where base camp sits, and follow small trails through glacial moraines. After two hours of walking the trail steepens as we leave the lower glacier and climb past multiple glacial lakes. Beyond the lakes, loose talus and scree eventually brings us to our rocky dome, and camp, immediately at the foot of Makalu's glaciers.

<b>Day 7-35</b>	<b>Climbing Makalu.</b> Our exact climbing plan depends on numerous factors, including weather, route conditions, and our level of acclimatization. We make at least two cycles on the mountain, climbing at least as high as 23,000 feet/7,000 meters, before attempting our summit push.
<b>Day 36</b>	<b>Pack and organize ABC.</b>
<b>Day 37</b>	<b>Trek Makalu ABC to Makalu BC.</b> The descent is again on small trails through glacial moraines, past numerous glacial lakes. Porters from the local villages carry our loads and allow us to move efficiently in the challenging terrain. We spend our last night in the mountains with the local villagers below Makalu.
<b>Day 38</b>	<b>Fly Makalu Base Camp to Kathmandu.</b> Once again, our flights will include both helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft, and our exact flight plan will be chosen based on mountain weather. In the air our flights offer incredible views of the mountains, the foothills, and finally the city. After landing in Kathmandu we return to our hotel for an afternoon of celebration, great food, and perhaps much needed massages. Night in hotel.
<b>Day 39</b>	<b>Contingency day for flights.</b> Since flights to and from the mountains are often delayed or cancelled due to bad weather, this is an essential extra day. If we arrived back in Kathmandu on time, this day can be used for sightseeing in the city, shopping for souvenirs, or sleeping in and enjoying the fantastic pool at the hotel.
<b>Day 40</b>	<b>Depart Kathmandu for home.</b> After a final group breakfast, return to the airport to catch international flights home. (Friday)

[Please note the above schedule is only one possible scenario. A mountain like Makalu requires flexibility, and every year our climb is very different.]



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