

Cho Oyu Rapid Ascent Expedition

30 Days in Tibet / Skill Level: Advanced



2017: September 5 - October 4 \$30,950*

2018: September 4 - October 3 \$30,950*

*All costs included with the exception of alcohol, in-town meals, and park permit.

Difficulty Level: Advanced - Must be able to climb moderate rock, ice, and snow terrain, often with an alpine pack on your back. You should be comfortable with camp craft in high-altitude camps, and able to perform at a high level for multiple days in a row at altitude. Prior ascents of multiple 6000 - 7000 meter peaks is required.

Overview

Alpenglow Expeditions' Rapid Ascent climbs are an entirely new way to approach big-mountain expeditions. After 15 years of guiding expeditions all over the world, including more than a dozen 8,000-meter peak expeditions, we have refined and distilled the acclimatization and climbing process to maximize safety, health, success, and enjoyment. Please contact to discuss exactly what these shorter climbs entail and join our teams this year to summit Cho Oyu in 21 days or Everest in 30 days!

At 8,201 meters/26,906 feet, Cho Oyu is the sixth tallest mountain in the world and one of the famed fourteen 8,000 meter peaks. It is the perfect first 8,000 meter peak for many climbers, and the ideal training peak for those planning a future attempt on Mt. Everest.

Why should Cho Oyu be my first 8,000m peak?

There are a number of reasons why we recommend Cho Oyu as a first 8,000 meter peak. First, the route is of a reasonable difficulty, with few technical sections. Second, the route has limited objective dangers as compared to other 8,000-meter peaks. There is limited risk from rock and icefall, and avalanche conditions tend to be rare and when they occur, predictable. And third, the mountain experiences much better weather than other "easy" 8,000 meter peaks in Nepal and Pakistan. This means we can spend more time climbing and acclimatizing and less time sitting in storms in tents. The mountain is also stunningly beautiful, has incredible views of both Tibet and Nepal from the climb and its summit, and our expedition gives us a taste of both Nepal and Tibet en route to and from the peak. It is also an excellent 8,000 meter ski peak for experienced and fit big-mountain skiers. Contact us to discuss this option.

Despite all of these reasons that make Cho Oyu the "easiest 8,000 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 of those of your teammates.

Why Alpenglow?

Alpenglow Expeditions ensures that the logistics, guiding and base camp staff, food, and equipment are of the absolute highest-quality possible. All of Alpenglow's 8,000 meter peak expeditions are organized and led by IFMGA guide, Adrian Ballinger.

Adrian is one of the most well recognized guides in the Himalaya, and the pre-eminent American high-altitude guide holding both AMGA/IFMGA certification and more than ten 8,000-meter peak summits. Adrian has an impeccable safety record over eleven 8,000 meter peak summits all while guiding or rope-fixing for guided teams, and has guided more than 50 clients to the summit of Mt. Everest over his past 6 summits. Adrian also has extensive experience organizing the most 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 further 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.

Alpenglow is also the leader in offering Rapid Ascent expeditions to 8,000 meter peaks, utilizing pre-acclimatization combined with the largest Sherpa and guide support as compared to other guide services in the industry. This allows you to climb and summit Cho Oyu quickly and safely.



Below are just a few of Alpenglow's key differences that allow for our Rapid Ascent itinerary:

- 3:1 maximum guide to climber ratio. All guides are IFMGA qualified or aspirants working towards finishing their certification. This is the lowest climber to guide ratio in the Himalaya.
- 2:1 sherpa to climber ratio. This ensures we have the sherpa necessary to carry loads, set camps, and assist climbers. All of our lead and personal sherpa on Cho Oyu are Nepali, and have worked with us on many expeditions to other peaks including Everest and Ama Dablam. They are assisted by local Tibetan sherpa for carrying loads and setting camps.
- Experienced expedition doctor Monica Piris (thirteen 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 Cho Oyu maximizes both our safety and our summit success.
- 4 bottles of oxygen per climber. This allows us to use oxygen climbing to and at our highest camp, and to climb to the summit on a higher flow than other expeditions, ensuring safety and maximizing success. Our Sherpa also climb on oxygen on summit day (unusual on Cho Oyu), 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 prides ourselves on providing 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 Cho Oyu Expedition if preferred.

Route Description

Our climb of Cho Oyu begins after arriving in Base Camp (15,750 feet/4,800 meters) via 4wd Landcruisers. The drive from Kathmandu is long, but goes through stunning scenery as we climb from the lowlands of the Kathmandu Valley, over the border between Nepal and Tibet, and up onto the Tibetan Plateau. We spend a day in Base Camp, organizing equipment to go up the mountain. Our pre-acclimatization means this drive and BC time takes only 2-3 days, instead of a week or more.

With each member pre-acclimatized, we move from Base Camp to Advanced Base Camp (ABC) in one day. ABC is actually where we spend most of our time on Cho Oyu and our camp, perched in a glacial moraine at 18,530 feet/5,650 meters, is comfortable and sunny. ABC 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 acclimatization hikes around ABC and to the nearby Nangpa La (a famous glaciated pass that leads into Nepal and is often traveled by local traders) we move to Camp 1 (21,000 feet/6,400 meters). The climb to Camp 1 begins easily by following the morainal valley to a small lake, before climbing steeply up a challenging scree slope to camp in a protected bowl on the glacial ridge. We spend at least 3 nights in Camp 1, During this time we also make an acclimatization climb over the short but challenging ice cliff (a steep 20-30 meter climb of firm ice on fixed lines), and across broad glaciated slopes to Camp 2, at 23,000 feet/7,000 meters. We do not spend a night in Camp 2, since we will utilize oxygen above this altitude on our summit push. After this climb to Camp 2 we descend to ABC for rest and to prepare for our summit push.

Our final ascent utilizes Camp 1, Camp 2, and a Camp 3 at 24,250 feet/7,400 meters). We climb to, and sleep at, Camp 3 on supplemental oxygen to ensure we are strong and healthy on summit day. The climb to the summit begins with the route's technical crux, a short steep rock step. From there the route climbs thirty to forty degree snow slopes up to the summit plateau. Cho Oyu's summit plateau is almost flat and the route traverses all the way to its far end and the true summit where we are rewarded with views of countless Tibetan and Nepali peaks, including inspiring views of Mt. Everest.

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 to Kathmandu and home.

Cho Oyu Rapid Ascent Expedition Itinerary

Day 1	Arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal 4,600 feet/1,400 meters - We transfer to our hotel, and begin the process of getting over jetlag.
Day 2	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, organize our bags for the trek, and receive our Chinese visas.
Day 3	Drive Kathmandu to Zhangmu (7,500'/2300m). This is a long day of driving that takes us out of Nepal through stunning scenery and delvers us into Tibet.
Day 4	Drive Zhangmu to Cho Oyu base camp (15,750'/4,800m). Arriving in base camp we'll unload the vehicles and get some rest.
Day 5	Rest day in base camp. We spend a day in basecamp resting and organizing gear in preparation for our push to advanced basecamp tomorrow.
Day 6	Move to Advanced Base Camp (18,530'/5650m). ABC is actually where we spend most of our time on Cho Oyu and our camp, perched in a glacial moraine this location is comfortable and sunny. ABC is home to our full Alpenglow infrastructure – heated dining tents, fully stocked kitchen, heated communications and hangout tent, internet access, and much more.
Day 7	Rest day in ABC. After our move yesterday we'll need to rest a bit and prepare for moving higher.
Day 8-25	Our exact climbing plan depends on numerous factors, including weather, route conditions, and our level of acclimatization. We make a few cycles on the mountain, climbing at least as high as 23,000 feet/7,000 meters, before attempting our summit push.
Day 26	Trek ABC to base camp. Time to start the long process of heading all the way back to Kathmandu
Day 27	Drive base camp to Nylam. Reversing our drive we spend the day in 4wd vehicles and spend the night in Nylam.
Day 28	Drive Nylam to Kathmandu. After a few days of driving we make it back to Kathmandu.
Day 29	Today is a day in Kathmandu to re-organize and get ready for heading home.

Day 30

Depart Kathmandu for home!

Client Expectations and Timeline

90+ Days to Departure

Reserve Spot	Make your deposit to confirm registration - if you haven't already, head over to our website and click "Reserve Spot" and select your dates. The rest of the process is as easy as buying a book online. Make sure that you select to add an extension if you wish to extend any expedition.
Q&A	Q&A with Alpenglow - time to ask any question about travel, logistics, training and everything in between.
Application	Complete full application including medical questionnaire & travel information.
Reserve Rentals	Reserve rentals if needed within application. For our climbing schools, we have a small rental inventory of boots, ice axes crampons, helmets and harnesses. These are provided at no cost on a first come first serve basis. Please let us know what you plan on renting as soon as possible.

Within 90 Days to Departure

Complete Payment	Full Payment will be collected at the 90 day mark. Alpenglow will contact you prior to taking final payment and once you confirm we'll simply move your booking into the final stages. For international trips, a wire transaction is the best way to send payment. We also accept credit cards with transaction fee of 3% or you can pay by check.
Book Travel	We recommend reviewing flight options outside of 90 days and confirming with Alpenglow on travel times. Use us to guide you to the best flight schedules to make travel as easy as possible. Once you book your flights don't forget to share with the Alpenglow office so we pick you up on time from the airport.
Training	This is the hard part. The hours of training you put in directly correlates to your success in the mountains. Train hard and be ready for the adventure of a lifetime!
Equipment	Compile all equipment using the equipment list as a guide.
Purchase Insurance	Purchase travel and rescue insurance. We recommend Global Rescue and Travel Guard. Click here to find links to each.

General Trip Information

Payment

1. A deposit of \$10,000 is required for all 8,000 meter peak expeditions. Deposits are due when registering for an expedition, and can be paid by check made out to “Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC”. All payments should be mailed to Alpenglow Expeditions at P.O. Box 3122, Olympic Valley, CA 96146 or sent via wire transfer. If wiring payment, please contact us for bank details and be certain that you are covering ALL fees! Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. This is not a flexible policy. Planning our trips takes significant time and has non-refundable costs as well.
2. Balances are due 90 days before the expedition departs from the United States. Payment should be made as described above.
3. The cost of your trip includes your land costs (excluding in-town meals). This includes: double occupancy lodging while in town, meals on the mountain, scheduled transportation while in the countries we are visiting, group camping and climbing equipment, individual technical climbing equipment (boots, ice axes, crampons, helmets, harnesses), and guides.
4. The cost of your trip does not include: flights to/from the city where the expedition begins, airport taxes, visas, in-town meals, immunizations, tips for guides or local staff, travel, rescue, or any other type of insurance, hospitalization or evacuation costs, single supplement charges, excess baggage charges, alcohol, or other personal expenses.
5. The costs of delays or changes to itinerary that are beyond the control of Alpenglow Expeditions or its agents are not included.

Cancellations

1. We reserve the right to cancel any trip at any time. Reasons for cancellation might include (but are not limited to) political instability, natural disasters, or inadequate enrollment. If we cancel a trip prior to its start for low enrollment, we fully refund your payments. If we cancel your trip prior to its start due to political instability, natural disasters, or other reasons of that nature, we will refund all but non-recoverable costs. Changes to a trip itinerary made by our guides for any reason do not constitute a cancellation, and no refunds will be made in this case.
2. If you cancel your trip more than 90 days prior to departure, Alpenglow Expeditions will refund your payment minus the non-refundable deposit. 60-89 days prior, Alpenglow Expeditions will refund 50% of your payment. Fewer than 60 days prior, there are no refunds or credits.
3. On any trip, our guides reserve the right to remove any person, for any reason. These reasons generally stem from a person jeopardizing the safety of themselves or another team member. This includes a person who is not physically able to climb at the level necessary for the chosen route. In all these cases, there are no refunds whatsoever, and the client will be responsible for any additional costs incurred in leaving the trip.

Flights

We recommend using Kayak.com as a primary source for finding low-fare airfares. If you prefer to work with a travel agent, we recommend Jane Chauvin at Penny Pitou travel: (1-888-526-4488) or jane@pennypitoutravel.com. She is fast, efficient and affordable and intimately aware of the challenges of booking mountaineering trips.

****Please confirm your itinerary with Alpenglow Expeditions before you purchase it.****

Insurance

We require that all participants carry rescue insurance, travel insurance, and health insurance. Your policy numbers must be provided to us prior to leaving the USA. Homeowner/Renter's insurance is also recommended.

- Rescue Insurance- For US citizens, we recommend obtaining rescue insurance through American Alpine Club and upgrading that service via Global Rescue. Visit www.americanalpineclub.org to become a member and obtain the appropriate level of coverage based on the altitude of the peaks you will be climbing with us. Helicopter rescues in foreign countries, while unlikely, can cost up to \$20,000. International climbers have several options as well for rescue insurance. Our recommendation is Global Rescue as we have had great success with them in the past. Your insurance must not have a mountaineering exclusion and must cover up to your trip's highest altitude. This coverage is very important.
- Travel Insurance- Coverage should include lost/damaged baggage, unexpected delays, accident/life, and trip cancellation. Trip cancellation will cover you for non-refundable air and land costs should you need to cancel your trip due to an emergency. Since our costs are often not refundable, this coverage is very important as well, and should be purchased as soon as possible after registering for an expedition.
- Health Insurance- All members of our teams are required to have current health insurance. This insurance should cover emergency hospitalization abroad as well as domestically.
- Homeowner/Renter's Insurance- While unusual, thefts can occur while overseas. We recommend a policy to cover these losses.

Medical

All of our expeditions and treks are physically demanding. Regardless of the skill level or experience needed, it is essential that you arrive in good physical shape, and prepared to handle extreme conditions, including cold, heat, and long tiring days. Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC and its guides reserve the right to remove any member of our trips at any time if we do not believe they are ready for the rigors of the trip.

Our guides are certified in wilderness medicine, CPR, and are experienced in client care in remote high altitude locations. However, Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC is not a medical facility and Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC assumes no liability regarding medical care.

You are responsible for your own medications, inoculations, and deciding whether you are physically able to participate in an Alpenglow Expeditions trip. You should discuss your participation in this trip, and the dangers involved, with your physician.

Some of the medications you may consider carrying with you include:

1. Tylenol – a simple painkiller for headaches and minor pains.
2. Ibuprofen – mild altitude headaches, along with body aches and pains, are common.
3. A cold and flu remedy of your choice (strong decongestant).
4. Pepto Bismol - for minor stomach upset, best taken in caplet form.
5. Immodium AD – to control diarrhea, when necessary. Again, tablets are preferred.
6. Cough Drops – the air at altitude is very dry, and many climbers develop hacking coughs.
7. A laxative agent of your choice.
8. Dramamine (or equivalent) – an anti-motion sickness agent of your choice as bus/plane

rides to our trailheads are often very bumpy.

9. Diamox (Acetazolamide) required – prescription medication often used prophylactically to prevent altitude sickness. You should have a large enough supply to take 250mg/day (best as scored tablets so you can take 125mg twice a day).
10. Z-pack required – a broad spectrum anti-biotic.

Also be sure to discuss vaccinations with your doctor. Often a travel clinic has the most up-to-date information on which shots are necessary for the country you are visiting. Be sure to mention that most of our trips explore only the highlands and capital cities. This might mean that you need fewer immunizations, and anti-malarials are often not necessary. Determine this with your doctor, and refer to your trip itinerary for the exact locations we will be visiting. At the very least, your tetanus shot should be up-to-date and you should have protection against Hepatitis A.

Aerobic Conditioning

We cannot stress enough the importance of being in excellent aerobic condition before arriving on your trip. Arriving fit will increase your safety on the trip and reduce the risk of medical issues. It will also dramatically increase your enjoyment and learning during your trek or expedition. At the minimum, we recommend an exercise regimen that includes a minimum of 3 one-hour workouts per week (biking, running, swimming) along with a few long days hiking as you get close to your departure date. Please call us if you would like to discuss a specific routine to fit your needs.

Money

The countries we visit can still be challenging places to use a credit card or find an ATM. While you may choose to bring these for backup, we recommend you bring enough cash and traveler's checks for your planned spending. Traveler's checks can be exchanged in most of the countries we travel to, however they often have lower rates of exchange and can be a hassle. American dollars are still the easiest way to carry money. Be sure you carry clean, new bills and have some smaller denominations. Carry your money and important documents in a hidden waist pouch under your clothes.

The amount of money you need varies by how many presents you plan on bringing back! In addition to souvenirs and gifts, plan on spending on airport departure taxes, alcohol and snacks, and tips for local staff and your guides.

Additional Notes

- Single Supplement - If you prefer a single room while we are in hotels, please let us know as soon as possible. There will be an additional cost associated for this.
- Cameras – digital cameras are an excellent option. Be sure to bring enough batteries and memory space for your entire trip. We have found that small pocket cameras are much better than big SLR's for summit days. You need a simple light system, and the new generation of digitals take great photos. If you are a photo buff, definitely bring your big SLR or video camera as well. The treks into our mountains and hanging in basecamp are great times to fulfill your photographic aspirations!
- Be sure to create a data sheet of all of your essential information – passport, credit card or ATM numbers, airline ticket information, visa number (if applicable), etc. This sheet should then be photocopied and scattered amongst your luggage. If any of your documents are stolen, having this information will be essential.

- Rental Equipment - Alpenglow Expeditions offers a limited number of mountaineering boots, crampons, ice axes, helmets, harnesses, carabiners, perlon, and belay devices for use by our clients. There is no additional charge for using this equipment, but please let us know as soon as possible if you intend to use Alpenglow Expeditions' equipment. Check your expedition's equipment list to see what technical climbing equipment is necessary for your climb or trek. Rental gear from Alpenglow is only available for shipment within the US. Rental gear must be taken home by the renter and shipped back to Alpenglow within two weeks of end of trip at the renter's expense.