

# The Great Himalaya Trail

Fancy traversing the whole Himalayan mountain range?  
**Bryn Davies** has found a route

**L**ast issue we introduced the massively long Trans-Canada Trail, a 22,000km recreational trail that, when finished, will be the longest hiking trail in the world. This issue we are taking you across the globe to the magnificent mountain range of the Himalayas and a trail called the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT). The proposed trail is set to traverse the entire Himalayan mountain range at 4,500km, but the only complete section to date is the Nepalese portion that measures in at 1,700km. The GHT combines pain and pleasure as it follows a high alpine route through Nepal, taking in some of the world's most stunning scenery on a route that is extremely challenging, but breathtakingly beautiful.

The idea to create the GHT came from a Dutch development agency called SNV (an organisation committed to fighting poverty and improving local governance), with the aim of increasing tourism in unpopular

areas of the Himalayas. Nepal relies heavily on its tourism industry and currently there are three main regions that bring in the money: the Everest and Rolwaling, Annapurna and Langtang regions. But it's hoped the trail will encourage people to visit the less-known but equally spectacular areas of the country.

The Nepalese portion of the GHT starts near Kanchenjunga in the east of Nepal and makes its way over some of the most incredible and diverse landscapes, from sub-tropical jungles to barren glaciers and alpine passes 6,000m above sea level until it reaches its end point in either Humla on the Tibetan border, or Darchula on the Indian border. The 1,700km section of the trail also passes eight of the world's 8,000m peaks (there are only 14 in the world) including Everest (8,848m), Makalu (8,463m), Cho Oyu (8,201m), Manaslu (8,163m), and Annapurna I (8,091m).

The estimated time to complete the Nepalese section of this trail is roughly 157 days, but the trail can

easily be broken into ten 34-day stages to get around the short tourist visas available.

## **Don't miss:**

### **The Everest and Rolwaling region**

This section of the trail takes you to within a stone's throw of three of the world's 8,000ers, and while Everest may not be one of the most spectacular mountains to look at, it can't be bad to see the world's highest mountain in the flesh. The region

## **The Great Himalaya Trail: the hard facts**

**Trail start:** Kanchenjunga (East Nepal)

**Trail end:** Humla (Tibetan border) or Darchula (Indian border)

**Length:** 1,700km through Nepal, but proposed to be a 4,500km traverse of the whole Himalaya mountain range

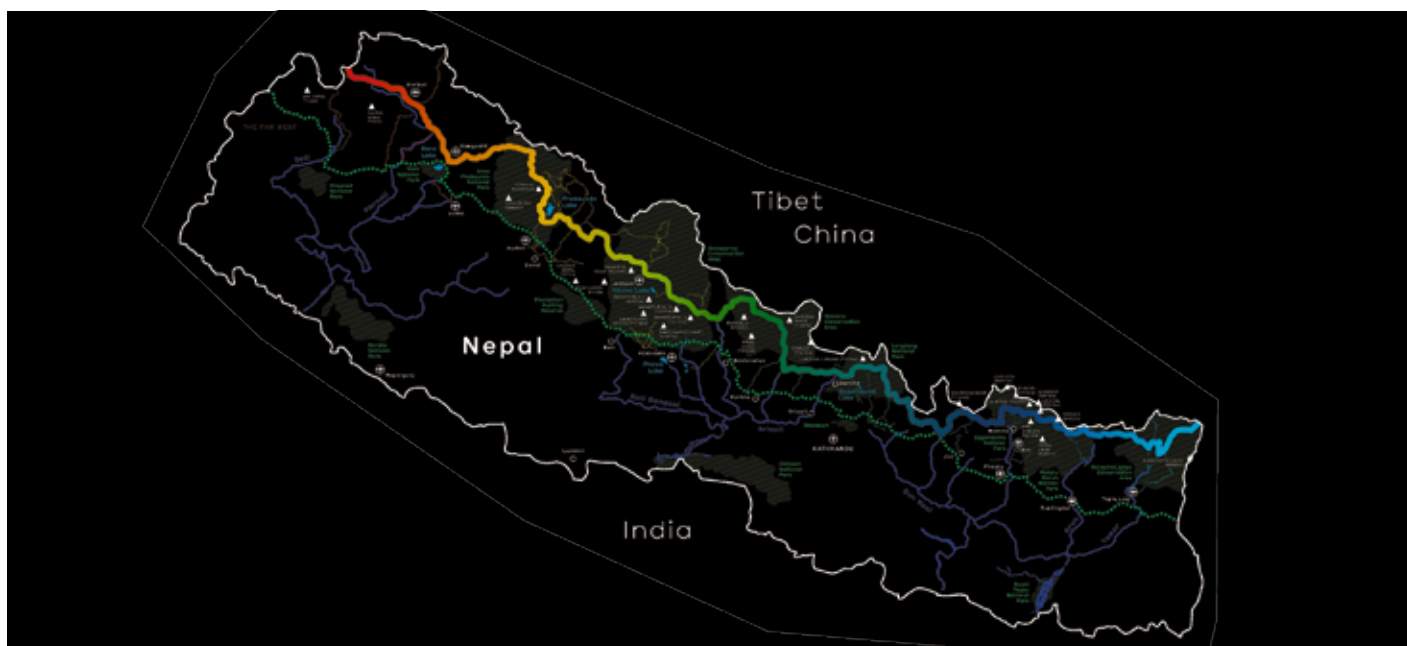
**Completed so far:** 1,700km

**Expected time of completion:** Not yet known

**Dangers:** High altitudes, snow leopards, extreme weather

**When to go:** Recommended start time of October to avoid monsoon season

**Estimated time to walk the Nepalese section:** 157 days





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is also home to Tamang, Sherpa, eastern Gurung and the indigenous Thami people, as well as black bears, red pandas, and leopards.

### Humla regions

This region is a sacred Buddhist Mandala (Sanskrit word meaning circle) and is often known as the 'Hidden Himalayas' due to its remoteness. The northern area of the Humla region is inhabited by Buddhists while the south is predominantly Hindu, making for some great cultural experiences.

### Langtang national park

The Langtang national park (surprisingly in the Langtang region) is the closest national park to the Nepalese capital Khatmandu and features a huge array of wildlife including wild dogs, Himalayan black bears, red pandas, monkeys and deer. Basically you'll have the opportunity to see more animals than you can shake a trekking pole at.

### What you need:

- **Warm clothing:** As you can imagine, the Himalayas can be pretty chilly in the winter and that's when you'll be doing the majority of hiking if you start in October. With altitudes reaching 6,000m it's a priority that you pack the appropriate winterwear.

- **Nepalese tourist visa:** For visiting Nepal you need a valid passport and a valid Nepalese visa. Visas range in price depending on how long you are planning on hiking for; costs are as follows: 15 days = £20, 30 days = £35, 90 days = £75.

- **A GPS:** While the well-treked regions are well documented, the remoter regions are not and trying

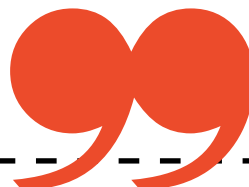


### What they say

"The world's greatest mountain range now has the world's greatest trail," says Richard Bull of

the Great Himalaya Trail Development Project. "Almost. While the Great Himalaya Trail will one day stretch 4,500km from Nanga Parbat in Pakistan through India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar to Namcha Barwa in Tibet, only Nepal, so far has a tested route of 1,700km.

"The route is split into 10 trekable sections, each of which offer a different experience: Makalu's challenging high passes guarding the way to Everest; Humla and Dolpa's spiritual Tibetan landscapes, home to the snow leopard; and Kanchenjunga's glittering peaks reached through rhododendron forests hiding hundreds of orchid species, for example."



## FIVE FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT NEPAL

**1.** Eight out of the 10 world's highest mountains are located in Nepal. They are: Mount Everest (8,848m), Kanchenjunga (8,586m), Lhotse (8,516m), Makalu (8,463m), Cho Oyu (8,201m), Dhaulagiri (8,167m), Manaslu (8,163m), Annapurna (8,091m). The other two that make up the top 10 are K2, on the border of China and Pakistan (8,611m), and Nanga Parbat in Pakistan (8,126m).

**2.** About half of its population live below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 a day.

**3.** Nepal has a land-mass of 147,181km and is the world's 93rd largest country (the UK has a land mass of 242,900km and ranks at 79).

**4.** According to Hindu mythology, the Supreme God Shiva lives in the Himalayas.

**5.** Siddhārtha Gautama (Lord Buddah), the founder of Buddhism, was born in Lumbini in Nepal.