

Planning

by Diana Hubbell

Q+A

I'M A FAIRLY EXPERIENCED HIKER AND CLIMBER, BUT I LIKE TO STAY SAFE. HOW DO I FIND A LOW-RISK TRIP THAT STILL PRESENTS A CHALLENGE?

Staying safe doesn't mean you have to sacrifice that sense of adventure. These four trips pack in some serious thrills and stunning scenery while keeping you out of any real danger.



Meet mountain tribes and summit snow-covered peaks in Nepal.



Ascend to the base camp of Chomolhari mountain in Bhutan.

NEPAL

Operator: Epic Tomato
Tour: Nepal - Forbidden Valley; 16 days from £5,890 per person.

Climb to a dizzying 5,280 meters as you brave the steep slopes and snow-covered summits of the Kang La pass. You'll get a dose of Nepalese culture when you trek through remote mountain passes, visiting the local tribes. Intrepid travelers will love seeing the hidden corners of the Himalayas, accessible only by a select few—including stunning aerial vistas during a fixed wing flight over Annapurna Massif—while cautious climbers will appreciate the 24-hour backup support both in-country and in the U.K. epictomato.com.

CHINA

Operator: WildChina
Tour: The Heights of Heavenly Mountain: Trekking Mt. Bogda; nine days from US\$3,500 per person.

A far cry from the country's eastern cities, the western province of Xinjiang has everything from scorching deserts to the sky-scraping peaks of the Bogda range. There, visitors wind through alpine meadows and glacial lakes with unbeatable views. WildChina requires all of its travelers to buy travel insurance (around an extra US\$40) in case the need for a medical evacuation arises, meaning that you'll get world-class care even in remote locations. wildchina.com.

BHUTAN

Operator: Ryder Walker
Tour: Bhutan Chomolhari Trek; 12 days from US\$4,895 per person.

While visiting the Land of the Thunder Dragon, you'll cruise through centuries-old monasteries and temples, including Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the country's oldest. As you ascend to Jangothang, your basecamp at the foot of Chomolhari mountain, you'll be in good hands—in addition to the standard first-aid and CPR training, each Ryder Walker guide is required to complete rigorous medical certification programs, including EMT and Wilderness First Responder. ryderwalker.com.

TIBET

Operator: GeoEx
Tour: Kangshung Face of Everest Trek; 22 days from US\$7,950 per person.

Welcome to one of the most spectacular—and tourist-free—sides of the world's highest mountain. Towering obelisks of ice line the trail as groups make their way up in near total solitude. In case of an accident, GeoEx has a long-established, global safety network in cooperation with organizations including Global Rescue, Travel Guard and the Shoreland Travax. And don't worry about getting stuck with a hefty bill—all of their trips include medical insurance and emergency evacuations. geoex.com.