MANANC TOPO GUIDE

Photo Credit : Poshan Shahi (Kushal)

MANANG TOPO GUIDE

Rock Climbing in Nepal



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Dear Readers,

Nepal's identity as a global hub of mountain adventures is not unusual. Standing at just 0.03% of the world, Nepal hosts 8 of the 14 highest mountains, valleys, lakes, glaciers, and sheer cliffs that drop down from the sky. More than 80% of Nepal is blessed with the mountain topography, and yet, only a handful of activities and spots are prevalent.

Nestled in the rain shadow of the Annapurna range, Manang region stands as one of Nepal's prime adventure destinations. From the challenging climbs to the world-famous treks, from cycling to canyoning and heritage tours to moto/ 4WD adventures, it is the future of himalayan adventures.

Amidst the geographical features that it hosts, one of the blessed but least recognized activities is Rock Climbing. The unique geology of Manang has gifted it with massive rock faces through the Marshyangdi river gorge. These rock walls rise thousands of meters from the base and extend all the way from the origin at Tilicho river to the lowlands of Besisahar.

The area covered in this guidebook is located within the Bhratang section. The dream of establishing climbing routes on these rock faces sparked during our treks and climbs in this region. With a wild fantasy of hanging off them and giving the same thrill to many enthusiasts, it was in 2016 when the dream finally took a shape. The first route - Gham Chhaya was bolted. We fought against all odds to make it happen; physical, technical, and weather related were among the easy ones. The biggest ones were trying to convince the local administration and people that we were not trying to rob or take away diamonds from their rocks. The early days were much harder as we had nothing but a desire to open up new routes. The rock faces of such scale and intensity needed a large number of bolts, anchors, ropes, drill machines and all should be of the highest quality, as many lives were to hang on them.

With the support of some generous friends with the same passion for climbing and exploration, we kept on adding new routes, and firmly establishing the deemed ones. It gives us immense pleasure to witness that there are now over 40 well bolted and graded routes, with the door always open for further exploration.

This initiative represents a small yet significant step towards promoting Manang and Nepal as sport climbing hub. We aspire to capture the attention of both Nepalese and global climbing community via this guide book. We invite you all for a unique sport climbing experience in our country.

Happy Climbing!

Acknowledgements

From the initial idea of establishing rock routes to the final stages of development, this project wouldn't have been possible without many good people and their selfless contributions.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Prem Bahadur Gurung, IFMGA/UIAGM, for being our earliest mentor. His guidance was pivotal to our exploration journey. My friends and climbing partners, Anup and Nar Bahadur have been fundamental to this project. They deserve a lot of recognition for their efforts to develop the climbing culture in Nepal. Riten Tashi and Nima Tashi helped in developing some routes. Sareena Rai, Saman Shrestha, Sunita Rai explored and bolted "Welcome to Manang" and "Syau Chor" routes. They all have my sincere appreciation.

Going back to the earliest days of this project, Josh and Charlotte were the biggest contributors. They explored, bolted, and graded 10 routes in 2018, for which I am eternally grateful. With a heavy heart, I acknowledge my friend, Late Dhruba Bista who had contributed to establishing the routes and envisioning the dream I share now since the earliest days. I hope you are at peace mate!

Owing to financial and logistics limitations, the process of exploring, bolting, grading, and documenting these routes took years to complete. There have been some friends and adventurers who, over the years, helped on their part to make this project happen. We received bolts, maillons, anchors, and monetary contributions which further fueled us up to add a new route and upgrade an existing one. I would like to heartily thank Sujita Shahi (Germany), Tobias Metzner, Suraj Maharjan (USA), Sajan Chhetri (USA) for their support.

I happily acknowledge the Petzl Foundation and Eric Lescarcelle who gave a big break to this project in 2022. Manishh Tamang (Pakhrinn), Prakash Gurung, Dipan Gurung, Prem Magar, Sonam Sherpa, and Anup Gurung made amazing climbs to bolt the new routes.

I would also like to express my warmest regards to Samraj Gurung, the MD of Farmhouse, Bhratang and Melina Gurung, the MD of Mountain Lodge Chame for hosting us and offering logistics support.

The most recent 2023 visit enabled us to document the routes, fix a few and capture images for the photo book. I express my sincere gratitude to the team – Pasang Rinzee Sherpa, Manishh Tamang (Pakhrinn), and Kushal Shahi for the wonderful images contained herein.

Thank you everyone. Vinayak Jaya Malla

TO LATE **DHRUBA BISTA** A friend I owe so much to.

DEDICATED TO THE CLIMBING COMMUNITY

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Photo Credit : Poshan Shahi (Kushal)

Nepal: A Quick Guide

Nepal, a land of unparalleled beauty and diverse cultures, offers a unique blend of ancient traditions and thrilling landscapes. This himalayan wonderland is perfect for those seeking authentic experiences and thrilling adventures. Embrace the unknown, chart your own path, and find yourself in the process.

Nepal is a paradise for thrill-seekers, boasting some of the world's top spots for mountaineering, trekking, biking, canyoning, zip-lining, bungee jumping, and, of course, rock climbing. The opportunities for adrenaline junkies are limitless. From the low-lying plains to the tow-ering peak of Mount Everest, there's something for everyone in this enchanting country.

The country's Hindu, Buddhist, and other cultural heritage sites, coupled with its pleasant weather most of the year, are also major attractions. So, come and experience the magic of Nepal !

Arrival and VISA

Arriving in Nepal is a fairly easy process. You can do: Via the Tribhuvan International Airport: Nepal's most popular international airport. You will get the visa on arrival at the immigration.

Permits and Fees

The climbing site falls under the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). The foreign climbers are required to take ACAP permit and Trekkers Information Management System Card (TIMS), from Nepal Tourism Board. Both can be organized in Kathmandu or Pokhara.

Climbing Permit

No rock climbing permits required so far. Make sure you acquire the farmhouse's permission before climbing (The Apple Crag).

Rock Climbing around Kathmandu

Rock climbing is a relatively new adventure sport in Nepal but is garnering decent popularity in this short time period. When arriving in Kathmandu, you can have a go at some convenient rock climbing spots around Kathmandu at maximum ~1-hour drive. Use them as warm ups for the Bhratang rock.

Hattiban Rock Climbing Spot - ~1-hour drive from Kathmandu (27°37'40.4"N 85°16'11.4"E) (27°38'08.6"N 85°15'28.6"E)

Balaju Nagarjun Rock Climbing Spot - ~Half hour drive from Kathmandu (27°44'28.8"N 85°17'21.9"E)

Nagarkot Rock Climbing Spot - ~1-hour drive from Kathmandu (27°42'20.5"N 85°31'18.7"E)

Kakani Rock Climbing Spot – ~1-hour drive from Kathmandu (27°49'19.6"N 85°16'00.3"E)

Suntakhan Bouldering Spot – ~1-hour drive from Kathmandu (27°46'32.0"N 85°23'36.7"E) Nearby

And you also can find a good few climbing/bouldering walls in the heart of Kathmandu.

Manang Rock Climbing

About Bhratang

Bhratang is a small village located administratively at Neshyang Rural Municipality, Manang district. It is situated in the shade of the mighty Annapurna range, especially under the Annapurna III Mountain. At 2920 meters above the sea level, this alpine village remains cold throughout the year.

Chame, the administrative headquarter of Manang district is located at approx. 6 kms from Bhratang where the nearest police post, hospital, and other service centers are located.



Bhratang and climbing sites Map

Trip Planning

Accessibility

The most convenient and reliable mode of transportation to reach Bhratang is by road. Local jeeps are available from Besisahar, Lamjung the starting point of the Annapurna circuit trek. Alternatively, a private vehicle offers flexibility and can cover the distance from Besisahar to Bhratang in a single day. Although the airport at Humde, approximately 16 kilometers from Bhratang, does not offer scheduled flights, chartered flights are an option for flying to Manang.

Accommodation

The Farmhouse at Bhratang is the closest and the only option for food and accommodation. The resort offers high tourist-standard services to visitors with an astounding view of the spectacular apple farm and the entire climbing site. To loosen up a bit, you can also find exotic localmade Apple-Yarshagumba Brandies, wines or foreign liquors of your choice. Or you can find local teahouses in Chame, Talekhu, and Dhikur Pokhari, the hamlets within a few kms from the climbing site.



For Reservations: 9851054305

www.farmhousebhratang.com

When Best to Go?

Manang district falls under the Semi-Alpine to Alpine climatic zone, as most of the land lies in the rain shadow of the mighty Annapurna range. This shadow of Annapurna massif causes Manang to always be cold and dry. The climbing sites are located around Bhratang village around an altitude of 3000 meters. Considering the cold, climbing is highly recommended in the warmer times of the year: Spring and Autumn.

Seasons	Months	Avg. Temp	Avg. Wind- speed	Avg. Solar Insolation	Remarks
Spring	Mar, Apr, May	15°C	10 km/h	9 hrs / day	Most suitable time of the year
Autumn	Sep, Oct, Nov	13°C	13km/h	10hrs / day	Fairly suitable time aided by clean weather
Winter	Dec, Jan, Feb	7°C	15km/h	8hrs / day	Cold weather but sun offers a treat while climbing

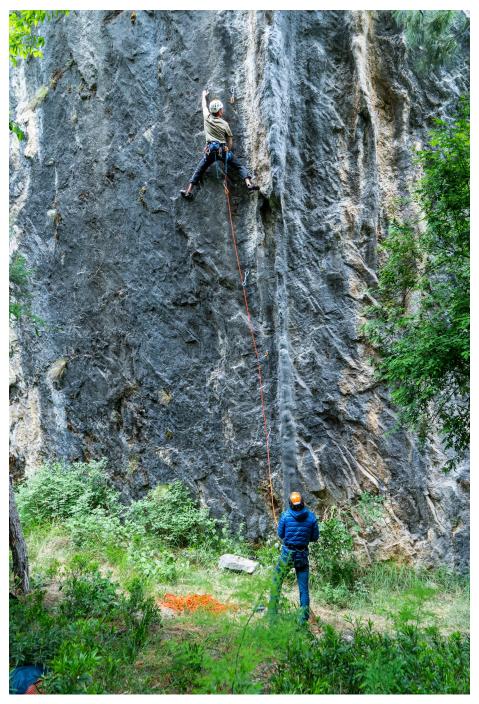


Photo Credit : Manishh Tamang (Pakhrinn)

Climbing Gears and Equipment

Climbers should come prepared with all the essential personal gear for sport routes, and trad gears, if interested in trad climbing. A 60-meter rope and 15 quickdraws are sufficient to climb all the routes.

Buying/ Renting Gears and Equipment in Kathmandu

You can find authentic distributors of international gears in Kathmandu. The Thamel area caters to all sorts of adventurers in finding the perfect fit they want.

Many of these shops also provide gear rentals. Rented gears are good ways to save cost but you must be careful in their structural integrity as you hang on to them for dear life. Safety is the utmost consideration!

Insurance and Rescue

It is highly recommended to get valid travel insurance for the entire time of your stay in Nepal. Nepali insurance agencies cannot insure a foreign tourist. For added safety, make sure your insurance covers Heli rescue.

Safety Considerations

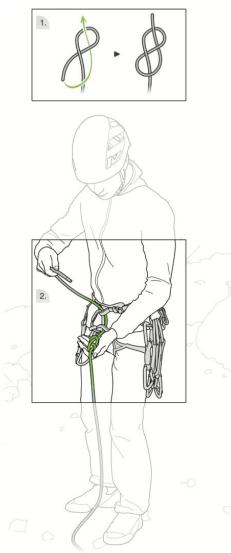
You will be staying & climbing at 3000 meters for a good many days. High Altitude Illness can be a problem. Make sure you are acclimatized and do not forget to pack sufficient doses of personal medications.

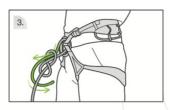
Climbing Fundamentals

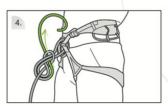
It is highly recommended to master the basic fundamentals of climbing. Please make sure you go with a well experienced climbing partner or certified instructors. Here are few basic guidelines on maintaining a safe climb.

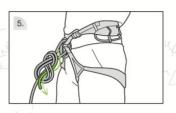
AT THE BASE OF THE ROUTE

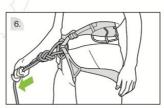
Tying in with a figure 8 knot





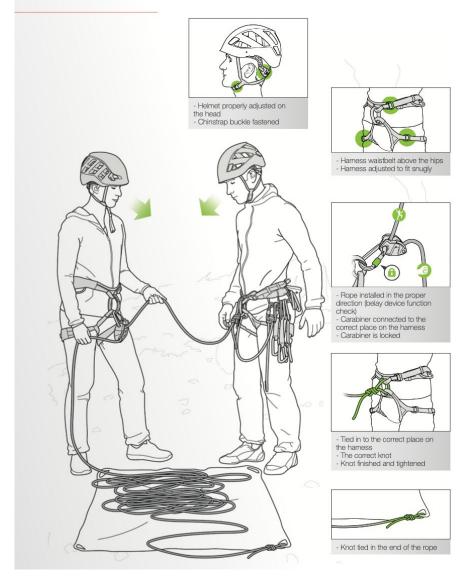




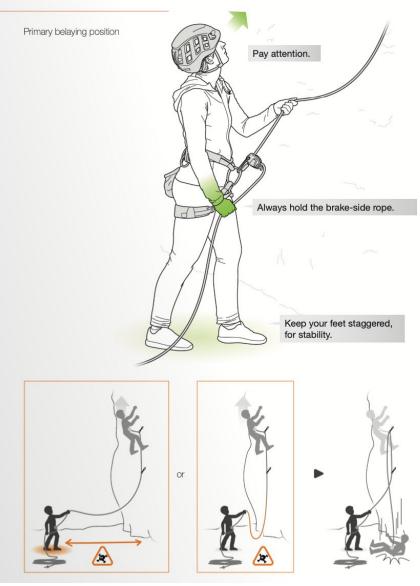


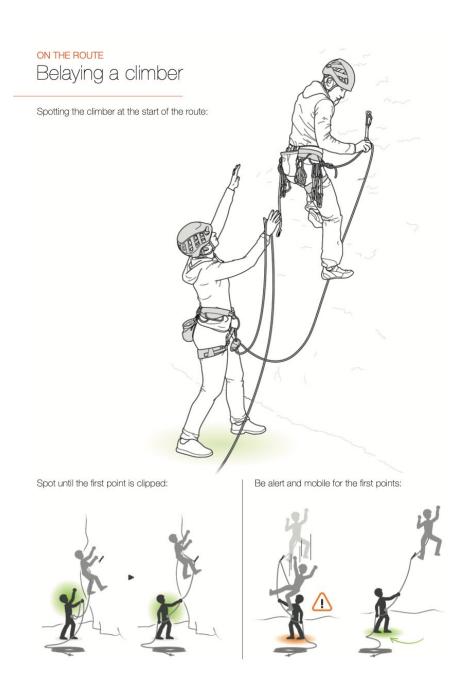


AT THE BASE OF THE ROUTE Partner check



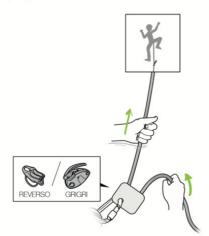
ON THE ROUTE Belaying a climber





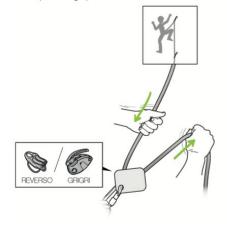
ON THE ROUTE Belaying a climber

Technique: giving slack



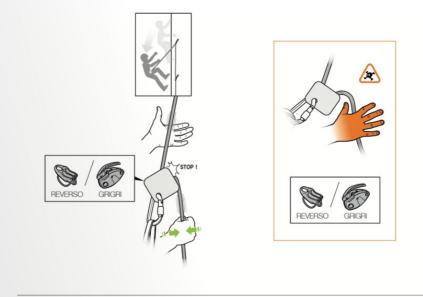


Technique: taking up slack

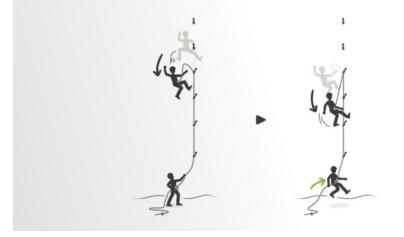


ON THE ROUTE Belaying a climber

Technique: holding a fall



For a dynamic belay, do a small jump or take a step forward to reduce the impact force on the climber:



ROCKFAX

Beginner
Experienced
Advanced
Expert
Elite

Colour bands indicate equivalent overall difficulty across different climbing types taking account of protection and environment. More at **rockfax.com**

Sport Grade	British Trad Grade (range from BOLD to SAFE)	UIAA	USA	Norway	Au		
1	Mod	I	5.1	0	4		
2	Moderate	II	5.2	3	6		
2+	Difficult VDiff	III	5.3	4	8		
3a 3b	Very Difficult HVD		5.4	4+			
30 30	Sev Difficult	IV- IV	5.5	4+	10		
4a	Severe HS BOLD	IV+	5.6	5-	12		
4b	Hard Severe UK tech 4a	V-	5.7	5	14		
4 c	UK tech 4c BOLD	V	5.8		15		
5a	SAFE 4c HVS	V+	5.9	5+	16		
5b 5c	5a 5b	VI-		6-	17		
6a	E1 BOLD SAFE	VI VI+	5.10a	-	18		
6a+	SAFE E2 BOLD	VII-	5.10b	6	19 20		
6b	6a 5c SAFE		5.10c	6+	20		
6b+	E3 BOLD	VII	5.10d	7-	22		
6c		VII+	5.11a	1-	23		
6c+	E4 63	VIII-	5.11b 5.11c	7			
7a	BOLD SAFE E5	VIII	5.11t	7+	24		
7a+			5.12a	17	25		
7b	BOLD	VIII+	5.12b	8-	26		
7b+	E6 60 BOLD SAFE	IX-	5.12c	8	27		
70	6c E7 6c BOLD	IX	5.12d	8+	28		
70+	SAFE	IX+	5.13a	0+	29		
8a	^{7a} E8 7a	X-	5.13b	g	30		
8a+	SAFE 70 BOLD		5.13c	9	31		
8b		X	5.13d	9	32		
8b+	SAFE 7b 7a BOLD	X+	5.14a	94	33		
8c	E10 7a	XI-	5.14b	10-			
86+	SAFE	XI	5.14c	00-	34		
9a	^{7b} E11	XI&	5.14d	10	35		
9a+	SAFE 7b		5.15a	10+	36		
9b	75	XII-	5.15b	1047	37		
9b+	SAFE	XII	5.15c	11-	38		
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Climbing Site	Route Sector	Route No.	Route Name	Grade	Aspect	Remarks	Absolute Location
Along the Road	Red wall	1	Gham Chhaya	6c	SW Facing	Trnsl. Sun and Shadow Multipitch route, 130m (6-pitches)	28.567166188 N, 84.210667194 E
		2	Watch Out	6b+			
		3	Wel- come to Manang	6c			
		4	Black Power	7a			
		5	Project Route	7c/?		Unclimbed	
	Far Left	6	Syau Cho	5b		Hidden to the left	
The Apple	Waterfall	1	French Salami	7a	SW Facing		28.5739795 N, 84.1902561 E
Crag		2	Rock Trip Manang	6a			
		3	Swedish Crag	6a+			
		4	Save the Trees	5c			
		5	Verdon Style	7a			
		6	Apple Brandy	6b+			
		7	Daami	6a+			
	Tufa Tower	8	Face Off	7a+			
		9	Apple Juiced	8a			
		10	Mesala Mastah	7b			
	Genesis Park	11	Genesis	6b+			
		12	Exodus	7b+			
		13	Royal Slab	6c+		-	
		14	Team Spirit	5c			
		15	Dahl Bath Powe	6a			
		16	Eagle's Nest	6a			

Climbing Site	Route Sector	Route No.	Route Name	Grade	Aspect	Remarks	Absolute Location
River Side Cliff	River Face	1	Bastien Crag	5b	E Facing		28.57114817 N, 84.18624792 E
		2	Jam Jam	5b		Trad Route	
		3	Hanging Balls	7b			
		4	Temple Hug	7b			
		5	Yak Crag	6a		Trad Route	
		6	Windy Corner	5c			
	Main Wall	7	Nepal Creek	5b	NE Fac- ing	Trad Route	
		8	Mantel Mantel	6a+			
		9	Friend- ship Story	6a+			
		10	Hungry Crag	6a			
		11	Juniper	6a			
		12	Dry Tree	6a			
	Bastien Garden	13	Don't Give Up	5c			
		14	Anything is Possi- ble	5b			
		15	Chicken Momo	6a			
		16	Wild Roses	6a			
Roadside Cliff		1	Buddha said No	7a+	W Facing	Both are part of the same route; the second starts at the first's top anchor (2-pitches)	28.5823889 N, 84.1839396 E
		2	Buddha Said Maybe	8a+/ 8b			
		3	Sea of Holes "A"	7b+		high start	
			Sea of Holes "B"	7b		road start	

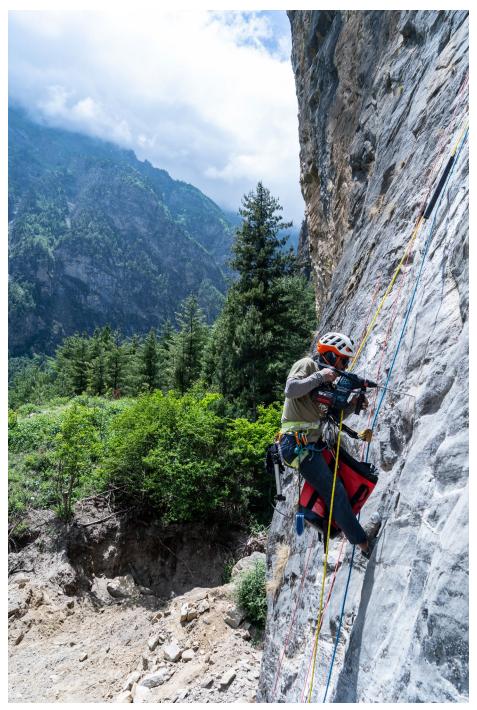


Photo Credit : Manishh Tamang (Pakhrinn)

Bhratang Climbing Sites

Along the Road

20 meters to the northeast from the Manang Road, located between Bhratang and Talekhu, this cliff face remains bold, erect and visible without any difficulty. Though the routes along the road go about standard lengths, the rock pillar rises some 2000 vertical meters. Gham Chhaya, the most iconic 130-meter-long route, stretches up to 6 pitches and has a unique name because of the abrupt hide and seek game between sun and the opposite cliff.

The hard climb of 6 pitches eventually rewards climbers with the views of the Marshyangdi River Gorge and the majestic Annapurna Range. Passing vehicles and trekkers accompany you; you might as well say hi!

1. Gham Chhaya 6c

Multi Pitch Route (6 pitch)

Gham Chhaya (Sun and Shadow), this name reflects the play of light and shade between the sun and a cliff across the Marsyandi river, creating a contrast and shadow on the route frequently. The climb is fun when the sun strikes and cold when the sun's out. It is better to start early. Half rope suggested, descent on rappel.

2. Watch Out 6b+

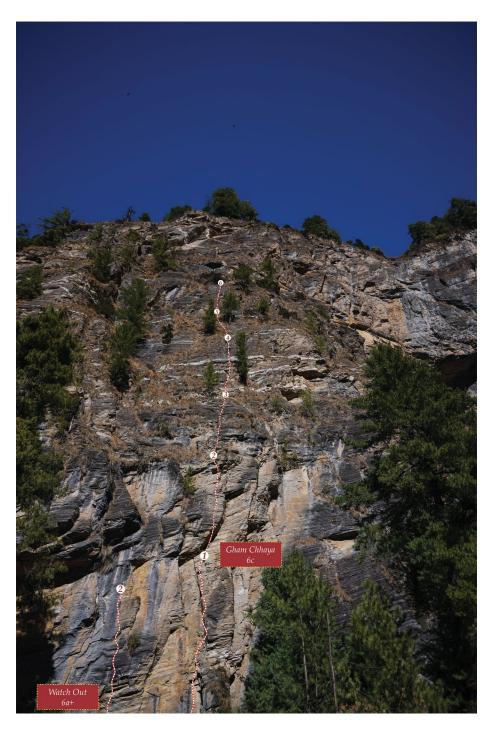
Long stretchy moves

3. Welcome to Manang 6c

Needs a tough balance; you might as well have to deal with the sheep droppings at the base of the route.

4. Black Power 7a

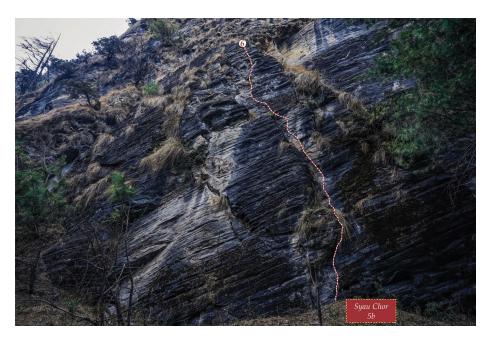
Needs powerful bouldering moves; watch out for crimps. The black lining on the wall can guide you up; however, monsoon rain seeps within the cracks to wet the last few holds.





5. Project 7c/?

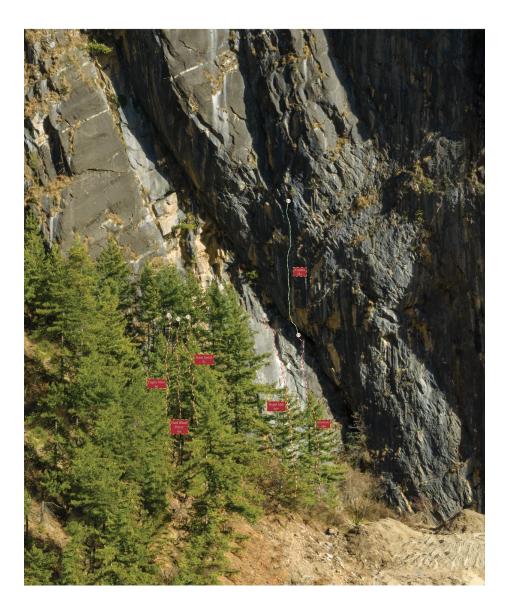
Unleash your creativity. The route hasn't been climbed yet. Dare a flash?



6. Syau Chor 5b Syau Chor (Apple Thief) A nice warm-up route.

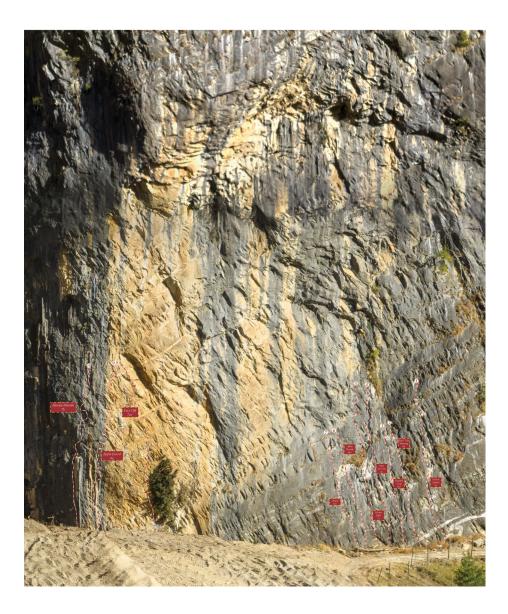


Photo Credit : Pasang Rinzee Sherpa



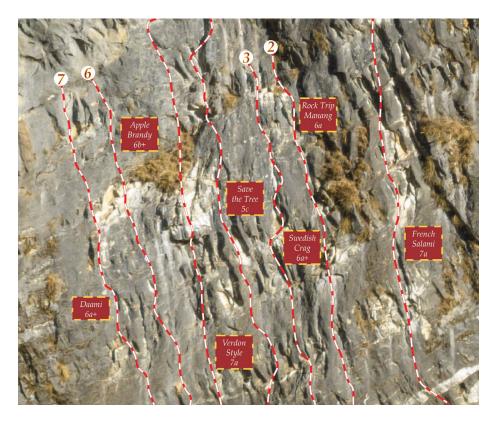
Apple Crag

Located inside the farmhouse territory, at some 100 meters to the NE, this section hosts 16 well bolted routes. It is better to ask for permission before heading off to climb. The routes range from 5c to 8a.



The rock face receives ample sunlight throughout the day and offers incredible views of the mighty Annapurna range. Monsoon can be a bit of a problem, as the continuous rain even builds up a small waterfall to the left side of the route – Daami (6a+).

Waterfall



1. French Salami 7a

A real climbing challenge – the takeoff needs good balance. You can however find some really good rest sections. The route does have possibility of extension

2. Rock Trip Manang 6a Fun and easy

3. Swedish Crag 6a+ Another good warm-up

4. Save the Tree 5c

Long but soft – a good warm-up climb

5. Verdon Style 7a

Resembles the original Verdon in France; crux lies halfway.

6. Apple Brandy 6b+

Daami's twin

7. Daami 6a+

A good easy slab

Tufa Tower

Bolted by : Charlotte Durif and Josh Larson on October 2018 Hike: 10 min from Farm House Routes: 4 (7a+ to 8b project) are firmly bolted for trad routes.



8. Face Off, 7a+, 12 bolts, 25 meters

The first 2 moves are tricky then a wonderful jug packed route for 9 clips until the end. A wonderful balance ending on a nice orange rock!

9. Apple Juiced, 8a, 14 bolts, 25 meters

The hardest line in the valley so far. Weird start to a nice tufa rest and the rest is a mini boulder problem, rest and repeat! The end packs a good punch!

10. Mesala Mastah, 7b, 14 bolts, 25 meters

The first route bolted during the 2018 trip! Ground up like the rest and well worth the harness rash. Climb up the left side of the giant tufa and onto the delicate technical face on perfect black rock! Bolted by: Charlotte Durif and Josh Larson

Genesis Park

Bolted by (Genesis and Exodus): Charlotte Durif, Josh Larson, and Late Dhurba Bista on October 2018 Hike: 5 min from Farm House Routes: 5 (5c to 7b+)



11. Genesis , 6b+, 8 bolts, 20 meters

A slab that starts easy with a tricky section near the end. It might still be dirty so please put some time in to brush some of the holds for the future cleanliness.

12. Exodus, 7b+, 15 bolts. 35 meters

The extension to Genesis and it climbs one of the best Tufas in Nepal! A MUST CLIMB. (If your rope isn't long enough for lowering – stop at Genesis anchor and re-thread.



Himalayan Institute of Tourism Education and Development

^{००°°} महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् | यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालय: ||

The Himalayan Institute of Tourism Education and Development (HITED) is a registered non-profit distributing organization based in Nepal.

HITED is built from a team of dedicated scholars and adventurers who share a common vision of developing Himalayan mountaineering, mountain tourism in a way that benefits people and communities while ensuring the environment doesn't suffer any damage.

HITED aspires to work in collaboration with the entire tourism network of Nepal, including people, communities, tourism business operators, scholars, academicians, stakeholders, and the different levels of government to enhance sustainable tourism in Nepal via education, training, and consultation programs.

Join hands with us for a sustainable future of Himalayan Adventures!



www.hitednepal.org



13. Royal Slab 6c+

One of the best slabs in Bhratang. Needs proficient footwork and balance.

14. Team Spirit 5c

Relatively moderate climbing on a ridge. Might be a good starter or a warmup climb.

15. Dal Bhat Power 6a

Big jugs, long moves.

16. Eagle's Nest 6a

Another moderate starter.



River face

River Side Cliff

This site is located opposite to the farmhouse towards the SW at some 15 mins walking distance. There's a wooden bridge over Marshyangdi river that gets you there. Ask for permission first, as it falls within the farmhouse territory. The side however remains cold throughout the day in winter as it receives very low to almost no sunlight. The top anchors are firmly bolted for trad routes.

1. Bastien's Crag 5b

Relatively easy starter

2. Jam Jam 5b (Trad)

A trad route; layback

3. Hanging Balls 7b

Easy start but gets complicated as progressed. The crux lies at the overhang section and you can feel a few things scaringly hanging.





4. Temple Hug 7b

Crux lies in the upper segment of the route and needs a lovely hug to get through

5. Yack Crag 6a (Trad)

Another trad route with good hand jams

6. Windy Corner 5c

A fine warmup climb; however, wind can be a thing to consider in this exposed ridge

7. Nepal Creek 5b (Trad)

A perfect trad lesson for beginners.

8. Mental Mental 6a+

By name, the route demands some mantels

9. Friendship Story 6a+

Some good hand jammings

10. Hungry Crag 6a

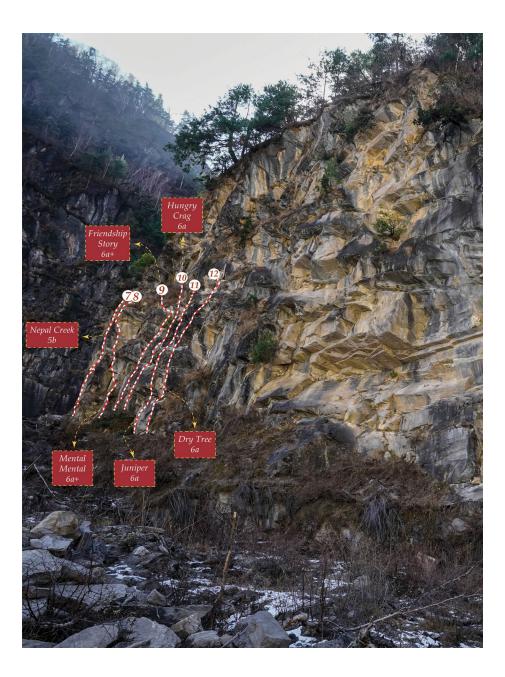
The longest single pitch in the entire site. The climb is sturdy enough to get hands exhaustingly pumped. Requires good endurance to make it through.

11. Juniper 6a

The line makes some negotiations with the local Junipers; climb however – fantastic.

12. Dry Tree 6a

Start off right and keep a distance from the Juniper line.



Bastien's Garden

These are the most convenient routes in the entire site. Originally engineered for kids and beginners, they offer short length, low technical climbs. Perfect for lead climbing lessons. Basal bushes and thorns have to be dealt with. Suggestion – borrow a sickle from the farmhouse !

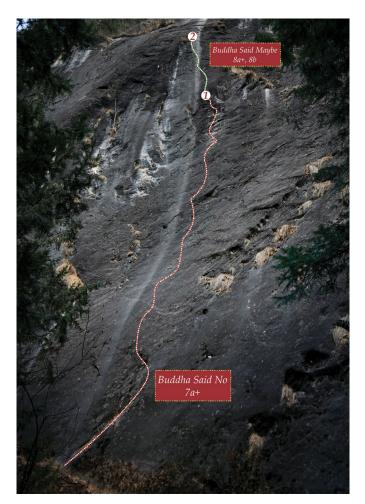


- 13. Don't give up 5c
- 14. Anything is possible 5b
- 15. Chicken Momo 6a
- 16. Wild roses 6a

Road Side Cliff

Easy to find, leave the Farmhouse and head towards Manang and in 10min you'll see the towering cliff before the first big left hand turn in the road. "Sea of Holes" will be your first encounter. This cliff is loaded with potential – you just need some time and a lot of bolts!

Bolted by : Charlotte Durif and Josh Larson on October 2018 Hike: 10 min from Farm House Routes: 4 (7a+ to 8b project) are firmly bolted for trad routes.



1. Buddha said No 7a+, 9 bolts, 18 meters

Start off with a technical friction slab climbing to a midway crux and then jugs to the first anchor!

2. Buddha Said Maybe, 8a+/8b, 13 bolts, 25 meters (open project 2018)

The extension to "Buddha said No". Right from the low anchor, you'll face the crux of the route, edges and bad high feet to a very dynamic dead-point to a slopper! Then a few more meters of crimpy and hard climbing! (move rightwards down the cliff to the drop-off to the road).



3a. Sea of Holes (high start), 7b+, 30 meters

"The best 7b in the universe?" The higher start is indeed harder than the lower start! Start on the grassy ledge near the tree and lean out to the giant hole and clip the first bolt. Very foot intensive crux to the 3rd bolt and then enjoy the ride on the most magical holes you've touched.

3b. Sea of Holes (road start), 7b, 30 meters

Same goes for the quality on this line, more moves than the higher version but less crux! Clip the first two bolts from the high ledge and lower down to the road for the ultimate Top-rope experience! Press, smear and crimp your way up to the 3rd bolt and continue to the chains !

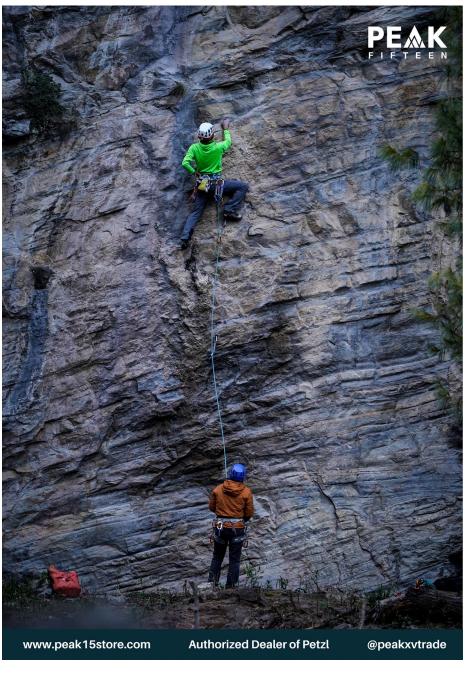


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