

FEATURED ARTICLE

# The world's best multi-day treks...without high altitudes

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Love trekking but suffer from altitude sickness? Or do you just want to want to enjoy a good trek without worrying about acclimatising? Altitude sickness, which usually kicks in around 2500-3000 metres (8200-9850 feet) and higher, affects some (but not all) of us, no matter how healthy you are.

And while we love [Peru's Inca Trail](#) and [Tanzania's Kilimanjaro](#), both of these iconic treks hit heights that can affect your health and prevent you from summiting. So we've rounded up the five best treks that feature unique terrain and boast fantastic scenery - minus the oxygen tank.



'Parque Nacional Torres del Paine, Chile' by cesargp. Creative Commons ShareAlike Licence

## 1. The W trek, Torres del Paine National Park, Chilean Patagonia

This up-down-up-down trek (its route forms the letter W) in [Torres del Paine National Park](#) is one of the best ways to experience Chilean Patagonia. Each day brings a new set of wow-inducing vistas with long stretches along luminescent glacial lakes (often filled with floating icebergs), rugged peaks looming above and southern beech trees pepper the vast Magellanic forest.

Highlights include summiting to see the 'towers', three granite spires that scrape the sky and a chance to glimpse the 'horns', two spikes with onyx-coloured tips (dark metamorphic rock covers the tops). Expect wind that will clear the cobwebs out of your brain and dedicate roughly four to five days to do the entire stretch. Weather is always unpredictable in Patagonia, but try to avoid the excessively cold and harsh months between May and September.

## 2. Bathali village treks, [Nepal](#)

Bathali treks take you through Kathmandu valley and are ideal for families or those wanting a soft multi-day hike. You start and end in [Kathmandu](#), meandering past Buddhist temples and rural hamlets including the lovely Bathali village, which sits on a plateau amid terraced rice fields and dusty red coloured thatched farmhouses. In between, glimpses of the snowy Himalayan peaks and swathes of bright-green forest greet you. Overall, this is a relaxing area to trek and remains relatively uncrowded compared to more popular routes in Nepal.

Treks take anywhere between three to six days and can be done year-round, but avoid rainy July and August and hyper-cold December through January.



'MacKinnon Pass' by anoldent. Creative Commons ShareAlike Licence

## 3. The Milford Track, [New Zealand](#)

With 54 kilometres (34 miles) of U-shaped, ice-carved valleys, pristine lakes, abundant birch trees and verdant forests in [Fiordland National Park](#), this one of New Zealand's most famous walks and widely considered one of the finest in the world. The route travels through temperate rain forests, with sections on raised platforms extending across the wetlands. You'll also wander across suspension bridges and visit Sutherland Falls; at 580 metres (1903 feet) it's the tallest waterfall in the country. The [Milford Track](#) takes four days and can be done year-round, but snow between June and August can make parts of the track nearly impassable. In high season (October to May) the trail is regulated and must be completed walking north.

## 4. GR20. Corsica, [France](#)

Running north to south across Corsica, France's rugged Mediterranean island, the GR20 twists and turns across 168km (104 miles) of craggy terrain. Considered one of the most challenging long-distance trails in Europe, this is not a journey for softies. The northern section is considered more alpine with steeper ups and downs, including the daunting Circus of Solitude, where you climb ladders across the steep, granite rock face. You can do the GR20 in either direction but hikers traditionally hit the trail from north to south to get the toughest (northern) bit out of the way first.

It's possible to do the trek year-round, but note that the refugios (catered huts) here are only staffed June through September and icy winter treks require technical gear like crampons and ice-axes. The entire route takes 15 days on average.



'South rim of the Grand Canyon' by John Vetterli. Creative Commons ShareAlike Licence

## 5. The **Grand Canyon: rim to rim and back, USA**

Why not go down first? From one rim to the other side and back again, this trek veers along different trails each way. As you descend into the depths of the crater you get a close-up look at the striking rainbows of stone filling the strata, the meandering Colorado River beckons, and you pass pretty Ribbon Falls, the 30-metre (100 foot) high waterfall that resembles ribbons billowing in the breeze. When you reach the bottom and look up, you'll feel as tiny as an ant. Avoid summer when temperatures easily hit 35-40°C (95-104 F) and winter (when parts of the north rim close). The hike takes about four to seven days as a round-trip.



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PUBLISHED  
November 2012



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