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# Introduction

Modern life is a rich and varied confluence of information, technology, social interaction, work, travel, family and fun – if you're lucky. There are smartphones in the most remote corners of our world and we have advanced in scientific endeavour further than ever before. Our cities are huge bustling metropolises and they're growing larger every day. More than half of the earth's population lives in these urban centres and this percentage is steadily increasing. However, despite this cumulative urbanisation, there is a tacit understanding among the human race that connection to nature is an essential factor in our happiness.

For all our obsession with man-made wonders nothing compares to the creations of Mother Nature. Vast underground cave systems, wild desert landscapes, breathtaking waterfalls, staggering geology and spectacular vestiges of our prehistoric past all remind us of our small place in earth's story.

And even with our ever-expanding knowledge of the way the world came to be, some landscapes still leave us utterly perplexed. This is the mystery and the majesty of the natural world. In this book we've attempted to capture just a fraction of what it has to offer, and we hope it inspires you to get out and find your own slice of pleasure in the great outdoors.





# Mount Everest, Nepal and Tibet

**THERE ARE NATURE'S WONDERS AND THEN THERE'S THE KING OF THE EARTH'S LANDSCAPE, MOUNT EVEREST.**

Exactly: there are few natural wonders in the world that capture the imagination quite like Mount Everest, the planet's highest mountain at 8848m. This breathtaking behemoth is not a wonder to be approached lightly, however, as every year Everest claims the lives of some of the climbers attempting to scale its summit.

**WHAT ABOUT IF WE JUST WANT TO GET TO BASE CAMP?**

Even the mountain's two base camps (one on the south side

in Nepal, and one on the north side in Tibet) are at altitudes of over 5000m. That's more than 200m higher than Mont Blanc – the highest peak in Europe. What we're trying to say is any attempt to get close to Everest is a serious pursuit, a once in a lifetime adventure.

**OK, POINT TAKEN – GETTING TO KNOW EVEREST IS NOT FOR THE FAINT-HEARTED.**

Don't let us put you off your quest. This is one of life's greatest challenges and brings its journey-makers the greatest reward. The epic proportions of an attempt on Everest are life-changing and if you make it you will join an exclusive club of humans who have come face to face with the true majesty of nature.

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