

The Himalayas or Himalaya (/ˌhɪməˈleɪ.ə/ or /hɪˈmɑːləjə/) is a mountain range in the Indian subcontinent, which separates the Indo-Gangetic Plain from the Tibetan Plateau. This range is home to nine of the ten highest peaks on Earth, including the highest above sea level, Mount Everest. The Himalayas have profoundly shaped the cultures of South Asia. Many Himalayan peaks are sacred in Dharmic religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

The Himalayas are bordered on the north by the Tibetan Plateau, on the south by the Indo-Gangetic Plain, on the northwest by the Karakoram and Hindu Kush ranges and on the east by the Indian states of Sikkim, the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. The Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalayas together form the “Hindu Kush Himalayan Region” (HKH).

The western anchor of the Himalayas, Nanga Parbat, lies just south of the northernmost bend of the Indus River; the eastern anchor, Namcha Barwa, is just west of the great bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River. The Himalayas span five countries: Nepal, India, Bhutan, China ([Tibet](#)), and Pakistan. The first three countries having sovereignty over most of the range.

Mount Machapuchare (Mount Fishtail) seen from Chomrong, Kaski, Nepal. Elevation: 6,993 m (22,943 ft), prominence: 1,233 m (4,045 ft).

Lifted by the collision of the Indian tectonic plate with the Eurasian Plate, the Himalayan range runs northwest to southeast in a 2,400-kilometre (1,500 mi)-long arc. The range varies in width from 400 kilometres (250 mi) in the west to 150 kilometres (93 mi) in the east. Besides the Greater Himalayas, there are several parallel lower ranges. The southernmost, along the northern edge of the Indian plains and reaching 1000 m in altitude, is the Sivalik Hills. Further north is a higher range, reaching 2000-3000 m, known as the Lower Himalayan Range.

Three of the world's major rivers (the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra) arise in the Himalayas. While the Indus and the Brahmaputra rise near Mount Kailash in Tibet, the Ganges rises in the Indian state of Uttarakhand. Their combined drainage basin is home to some 600 million people.

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