

= Shambhala : Expedición al Himalaya =

Shambhala : Expedición al Himalaya (simply known as Shambhala) is a steel Hyper Coaster roller coaster located at the PortAventura amusement park in Salou , Catalonia , Spain . Manufactured by Bolliger & Mabillard , it is the tallest (78 metres (256 ft)) and fastest hypercoaster (134 kilometres per hour (83 mph)) in Europe . It also has the longest drop of any roller coaster in the continent (78 metres (256 ft)) . Shambhala is named and themed after the inaccessible land in the Himalayas ; Shambhala . It was announced to the public on October 24 , 2011 , and opened to the public on May 12 , 2012 .

= = History = =

Rumors that PortAventura would be investing in a new Bolliger & Mabillard Flying Coaster or Dive Coaster roller coaster emerged in late 2010 . In May 2011 , speculation that the park was planning to build a hypercoaster that would pass over Dragon Khan arose . Land clearing also began in the summer of 2011 . Shambhala was announced to the public on October 24 , 2011 ; the layout of the roller coaster was leaked 2 days earlier . The last piece of track was installed in mid @-@ April 2012 following a signing event and the placement of the several country flags on the track . Testing of the ride began in the same month . Following the completion of testing , a ribbon cutting ceremony was held on May 12 , 2012 before opening to the public the same day . Over 300 workers from countries such as Germany , France , Hungary , Poland , Switzerland , and United States of America took part in the construction of Shambhala .

The roller coaster currently holds three records ; tallest , longest drop , and fastest hypercoaster in Europe . All three records were held by Silver Star at Europa @-@ Park prior to Shambhala 's opening .

= = Ride experience = =

After departing from the station , the train makes a 90 degree turn to the right , then begins to climb the 76 @-@ metre (249 ft) tall chain lift hill . Once the train reaches the top of the lift , the train drops back down to the ground on an 77 @.@ 4 degree angle reaching speeds of up to 134 kilometres per hour (83 mph) as it passes through a tunnel . Following the first drop , the train then makes a slight left turn into the first of five camelback hills before dropping again and entering a figure @-@ 8 @-@ like helix . Next , the train goes over a small hill ; at the same time , passing through a trim brake . Immediately after , the train enters the second camelback hill , followed by a slight left turn into an element that is similar to a splashdown as the track crosses under Dragon Khan . After going over the third and fourth camelback hills , the train passing through the mid @-@ course brake run . Finally , after making a banked downward left turn , the train passes over the final camelback hill before entering the final brake run leading directly back to the station where the next riders board . One cycle of the ride lasts about three minutes .

= = Characteristics = =

= = = Trains = = =

Shambhala operates with three steel and fiberglass trains . Each train has eight cars with two rows that seat two riders each for a total of 32 riders per train ; each seat has its own individual lab @-@ bar restraint . This configuration allows the ride to achieve a theoretical hourly capacity of 1 @,@ 680 riders per hour . Riders also experience up to 3 @.@ 8 times the force of gravity . The structure of the trains are colored gold and cyan , the lap bar restraints are cyan , and the seats are black .

= = = Track = = =

The steel track of Shambhala is approximately 1 @, @ 564 metres (5 @, @ 131 ft) long , the height of the lift is 76 metres (249 ft) , and covers an area of about 14 @, @ 000 m2 . The roller coaster has no inversions though it does feature five camelback hills , each at least 20 metres (66 ft) tall , a splashdown , and inclined figure eight element .

Including the supports , the total weight of the roller coaster is approximately 1 @, @ 600 tonnes (1 @, @ 600 long tons ; 1 @, @ 800 short tons) . 4 @, @ 000 m3 of cement was used for the foundations that hold up the supports and some are as deep as 18 metres (59 ft) . The track is white with cyan rails while the supports are grey .

= = = Theme = = =

Inspired by both Nicholas Roerich stories and the Kingdom of Bhutan , Shambhala is named and themed around the story that within the Himalayas there is a lost world (Shambhala) that is impossible to access and is the source of happiness . As guests walk through the themed queue and board the train , they go on an expedition to find this land .

The roller coaster is located in the China section of PortAventura .

= = Reception = =

Following the opening of Shambhala , Kirmes & Parks magazine named the roller coaster as the best European attraction introduced in 2012 . Patrick Purcell from Mirror said that the roller coaster lived up to its hype and that , " It is also one of the smoothest roller coasters I 've encountered . " Sophie Castle from Travel Channel UK praised the height of Shambhala and said that , " Shambhala is definitely an opportunity that shouldn't be missed . " Ethan Williams from the Daily Mail gave the roller coaster a five out of five for its speed , surprise factor , and fear factor . He also liked the amount of airtime the roller coaster gave . In 2013 , Shambhala was featured on Travel Channel 's television series Insane Coaster Wars : World Domination .

Also , the ride entered Mitch Hawker 's Best Roller Coaster Poll at 6 in 2012 before dropping to 8 in 2013 as shown in the table below .

The roller coaster has never placed in Amusement Today 's Golden Ticket Awards .