

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days



Legend has it that the omnipresent Guru Rinpoche, who spread Tibetan Buddhism throughout the Himalaya, discovered this hidden land, a “beyul” or refuge or shangri-la, over 1700 years ago, and it has been inhabited by Tibetan yak and sheep herders, called drokpas, for over a thousand years. Now a part of Nepali district of Dolpa, but historically was part of the Zhangzhung Bon-po Kingdom which dominated Western Tibet for over a thousand years, later defeated by the first Tibetan dynasty, Yarlung, between the sixth and eighth centuries.

Upper Dolpo trek is an evocative journey back in time to a rugged mountainous region of drystone-walled villages and Tibetan gompas, meandering alpine valleys, sculpted gorges, sacred mountains and high, sometimes snowy, passes. Our route is also the most comprehensive Upper Dolpo itinerary, taking in the entire high country and of course famed Phoksundo and the adventurous trekking exit to Jomsom.

Our Dolpo trek begins with spectacular flights along the Himalayan range to the small Juphal airstrip where we step back in time and ease into the trekking rhythm. There is no need to visit Dunai with its government offices, instead we directly hike up the richly forested Suligad River gorge, an introduction to the turquoise Phoksundo Lake where we explore the nearby gompas and villages. Entering Upper Dolpo, we traverse and climb around the spectacular lake, perhaps the most significant and certainly the most beautiful in Nepal. Scenic camps lead to our first 5000 meter pass, our unique route to sacred Shey Gompa, Shelri, Saldang and Crystal Mountain, which we can walk around, performing a kora – or relax and wash clothes.

From Saldang we climb over a ridge to culturally fascinating Shiman and Tinje (Tinkyu), busy threshing the autumn harvest, and wander along the rolling Panzang Valley traversed by traders caravans. Our last fortified Dolpo village is Chharka and some glorious big sky trekking leads to the intimidating three pass exit to Sangta, tucked away in a hidden valley of Mustang. Rounding one last major ridge with extensive Upper Mustang panoramas we descend into the Kali Gandaki valley for a smooth exit, flying out of Jomsom.

Trip Highlights

- Timeless and quaint Dolpo villages
- Tibetan Buddhist gompas (monasteries)
- Shey Gompa and Crystal Mountain
- Unique route around Crystal Mountain
- Stunning turquoise Phoksundo Lake
- Rarely visited Bhijer route
- Exotic wildlife and impressive display of wild flower
- Visit cultural places at Shey Gompa, Sangdang, Chharka.
- Breathtaking mountain panoramas and arid rolling hills
- Peaceful, scenic wilderness camps

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Kathmandu

Welcome to Nepal! Upon arrival in Kathmandu a *travel-to-nature Asia* guide/representative will be at the airport to greet and take us to our hotel. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

If you're not arriving too late and not feeling jet-lagged, take some time to explore Kathmandu's medieval backstreets, discover temples dating back to the 16th century, make your way down to Thamel, the main tourist hub in Kathmandu and a great place to dine. There are myriads of options to choose from like New Orleans Cafe, Rum Doodle,

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

Bear Garden etc just to name a few. Enjoy your evening and get some rest as the adventure begins tomorrow!



Accommodation: Manaslu Hotel

Day 2: Spiritual Mysteries of Kathmandu Valley

Pashupatinath - Boudhanath – Bhaktapur

Weather permitting, we start our day with a scenic Everest Mountain flight (optional) over the Himalaya to view Mt. Everest and many eastern ranges of Himalayas. Or begin our morning, visiting Hindu Pashupatinath (UNESCO Heritage site) and its sacred temple complex on the banks of the holy Bagmati river. Here, monkeys run up and down the steps of the burning ghats, and trident-bearing siddhus draped in burnt-orange and saffron sit serenely meditating - when they're not posing for photos-for-rupees.

Next, the striking Buddha eyes of Boudhanath Stupa (UNESCO Heritage site) watch over a lively and colorful Tibetan community and attract pilgrims from all over the Himalayan Buddhist realm. In the midst of traditional gompas, and hung with long strings of multi-colored prayer flags, Boudhanath attracts Sherpas, Tibetans and tourists alike for daily circumambulations (koras) of the stupa.

For lunch we will drive to Bhaktapur city. Bhaktapur (UNESCO Heritage site) is a home of medieval art and architecture and it is like a living museum. As we walk along its cobblestone streets, notice the many ornately carved windows for which the town is

famous. Over dinner we go over gear for trek & wildlife Safari and get to know your trekking guide. Overnight stay in Kathmandu.

Accommodation: Hotel Manaslu

Meal: Breakfast

Day 3: Fly to Nepalgunj (150 m)

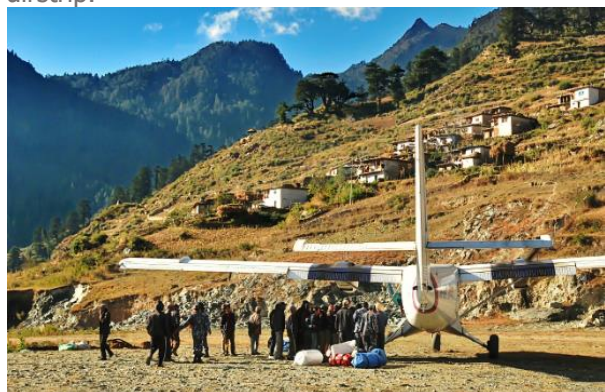
Transfer to the domestic airport for about an hour scenic flight to Nepalgunj. At Nepalgunj we will have time in the late afternoon or evening to have a look around the town which is situated on the southern Nepal border with India. Usually weather of Nepalgunj is hot and humid. Overnight stay in Nepalgunj.

Accommodation: Siddhartha Hotel

Meal: Breakfast

Day 4: Fly to Jhupal (2475 m) and trek to Sulighat (2282 m)

Transfer to the airport for an early morning flight to Jhupal. Dolpo flights are always early in the morning. This is because high winds in the Thulo Bheri Valley begin around 10 am, making later flights impossible. Once we have gotten all our equipment of the Twin otter in Jhupal (2,500 m), we start out on the short walk from Jhupal to Sulighat to avoid the bustle of Dunai and instead we stay at a peaceful, relatively new campsite that is a couple of hours walk from the airstrip.



Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

Day 5: Trek to Chhepka (2,838 m)

We will follow the route of the confluence of the Thuri Bheri and Sulighat rivers and turn to the north and follow the Sulighat River. The trail is fairly undulating and we are never far away from the river and its roar. We also walk through some nice villages such as Parela meaning eyelash, Rahagaon meaning eyebrow, and Ankhe meaning eye.

Accommodation: Camping Tent
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6: Chhepka - Renji

The path goes entirely through the forest to reach at Renji. This is a very small village and consists of just a couple of houses and a primary school.

Accommodation: Camping Tent
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7: Renji – Ringmo (3,733 m)

This day about 2 hours walking you will reach at Amchi Hospital. The walk goes almost entirely through beautiful pine forests, with some bushes, birches and other broadleaf trees in it as well. Before reach to Ringmo on the way you will see a spectacular waterfall of 167 meters high. After views point the path is going down for about half an hour until it gets close to the river again then walking through the forests, till you reach Ringmo. Ringmo is a charming village. People practice the Bonpo religion here. Bonpo is a lot older than Buddhism and goes thousands of years back. It has more animistic aspects than Buddhism. For outsiders it is difficult to see the difference between Bonpo and Buddhism, but one important aspect is that you have to cross their Mani walls and chortens anti-clockwise, while according to Buddhist custom, you pass them clockwise. The women wear dark or checked dresses with colorful aprons made from yak wool. You see fewer men in the typical dress, which is a long coat, from which they let one sleeve hanging down. Strolling around the village, you might see women weaving. In Ringmo women make very nice woven

products, like belts, bags, shawls and blankets. Most items are made from cotton, but they also sell products made from yak wool. There are a few shops where you can buy this item.

Accommodation: Camping Tent
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8: Explore Ringmo

Your body needs time to acclimatize to the higher altitude. The Phoksundo Lake is such a beautiful place for a free day. There is a beautiful Bonpo Gompa (Monastery) at the shore of the lake, which is worth a visit. It's a 20 minute walk to the monastery through the pine forest. In the monastery you can observe a statue of Thönpa Chenrab, the founder of Bonpo religion, a Buddha who lived thousands of years ago.

Accommodation: Camping Tent
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 9: Ringmo - Sallaghari

This day you enter the restricted area of Upper Dolpo. You follow the famous Demons Trail from the movie Caravan of Eric Valli, a beautiful movie about the life of people in Dolpa who bring their yaks over difficult passes bearing salt from Tibet to trade with grain from the lowlands. In the movie, this trail is used during this salt caravan and one of the yaks falls in the lake here. It's a spectacular trail, going high above the Lake. At some parts it gets very narrow due to landslides. The trail climbs to a ridge, from which you have a spectacular view on the Lake,

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

Ringmo, the dark green pine forests and the snowcapped mountain Norbung Kang (6,085 m) to the south. It's now a gradual descend to the lake northern shore, which is a good place for lunch. After this the trail climbs through a wide valley, crossing some streams. You have a splendid and nearby view to the flanks and tops of the snowcapped Kanjirowa Himal (6,612 m). You arrive at an alpine area which is a good place to camp.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

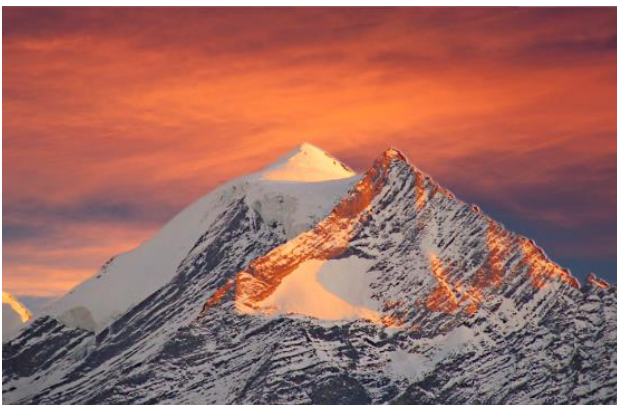
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10: Sallaghari – High Camp via Kang-La (5375 m)

The Phoksundo Valley gets quite narrow, with high rock walls on both sides. You have to cross a couple of streams. After about half an hour, you leave the main valley and enter a narrow gorge. It's a long, pretty steep climb through the steep sided valley. The campsite is at Snowfields Camp, a name given by Peter Mathiesson in his famous book the Snow leopard. From here strenuous climb of about 2½ hours over a dusty path to Kang-La (5,350 m), locally also called Ngadra-La. There is snow most of the times, which makes a bit difficult for descending.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 11: High Camp – Shey Gompa (4160 m)

From here descend is pretty steep the first 45 minutes, but after this, it is going gradually for about 3 hours, till you reach Shey Gompa. Getting nearer, you pass red and white chortens and Mani walls. Shey Gompa is a very small village, with a couple of houses, and of course the Gompa. The 11th century Gompa is located beneath the Crystal Peak on a small grassy plain, at the confluence of two rivers. It is said to be constructed by a Tibetan Buddhist, who arrived here on the back of a flying snow lion. It's a magical place, and Shey Gompa is often called the spiritual heart of Dolpa. Every year hundreds of pilgrims come to visit the Gompa and to make a Kora (Clockwise Circuit) of the Crystal Peak. People living here are direct descendants of Tibetans, which you can notice easily by their faces and their dress. They women wear dark dresses with colorful aprons made from yak wool. Men wear a long coat, from which they let one sleeve hanging down.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12: Explore Shey Gompa

During the day, we can go to Tsakang Gompa (4,575 m), a monastery from the Buddhist Kagyupa sect. This gompa appears in the movie Himalaya. It is spectacularly located high on a red rocky slope. The trail to Tsakang Gompa partly follows partly the same trail as pilgrims follow to make a kora of the Crystal Peak. We will probably see flocks of blue sheep in these areas. Many blue sheep live here, as the abbot of Shey Gompa imposed a ban on hunting them. Besides, in these regions you have the best chance of seeing the snow leopard.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13: Shey Gompa – Namgung (4430 m) via Shey La (5010 m)

Another pass to cross this day, the Sele-La, also called Gelu-La, of 5,000 m. The climb to the pass goes through a narrow valley. From the pass we have a good view to the north of the arid Tibetan Plateau, which is stretching out seemingly endlessly before

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

you. To the east you can see Mustang. After the pass, it's a long descend to the pastures of Namgung. Scattered in the landscape, we will see some fields. Many times, accompanied with a big Tibetan tent, as the fields are too far from the village to go there and go back each day. The people in Namgung are very friendly and open.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 14: Namgung – Saldang (3770 m)

The path goes high above the Namgung River and then descends steeply to the village of Saldang. Saldang is the largest settlement of inner-Dolpo. It's a spread out, traditional agricultural village, surrounded by fields. Barley, buckwheat and potatoes are among the few crops that can grow in this barren landscape. Besides, people live from what the yak gives them and from trade. Saldang is close to the Tibetan border and some of the salt trade caravans pass through Saldang. The trading of salt for grain and rice is a century old tradition that still prevails in Inner-Dolpo. The people from Saldang are semi-nomadic. In the warm months they trek in the highlands with their herds of yaks and sheep. The ones who are better off let the pure nomadic people of Dolpa.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15: Saldang - Nisalgaun

The trail follows the Nang Chu river most of the way on this wild barren windswept terrain. Walk begins along the fairly gradual path with few ups and downs slope and then passing through the small settlement of Tiling and Lurigaon till we reach to Yangier Gompa (3,750 m) and visit very old Bon-Po Monastery. We then continue walk to Nisalgaon where our camp set.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 16: Nisalgaon – Shimengaon (3870 m)

We continue up the valley to Mugaon and climb towards the Mushi La at (5,030 m). Then we descend towards Shimen village, we end the day at a good campsite in pastures above the village at 4,010 m.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 17: Shimengaun – Tinje (4150 m)

Heading south along the Panjyan Khola, staying on the eastern bank, we pass two trails leading north to the border of Tibet on our left, and further along Pu Gompa in the hills to the right. Namyal Gompa is another hour away also to the south of the trail, a larger Gompa. From Targaon and Phalwa, another trail branches off to the north heading to the Tibetan border, signifying how important trade with Tibet is still to the Dolpo. Tinje, just past this intersection and before another, is a large, prominent village from where many of the villagers acting in the movie 'Himalaya' come. Tenzin Norbu, the famous 'Ngagpa' painter of Dolpo, also comes from the Panzang region. In the old times, his ancestors, also monk painters, traveled to Lo Manthang in Mustang to pay their tribute in murals, Thankas and Mani walls. We've been told it's an amazing village, so we've scheduled a 'rest' or exploration day to take advantage of this.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

Day 18: Tinje – Rapka (4515 m)

We trek past the runway of mysterious Tinje to a trail junction at (4,130 m), where a high route leads to Tarap. We continue southward to a campsite on the banks of the river at Rakpa (4,530 m).

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 19: Rakpa – Chharka (4110 m)

We begin our day with a long climb to the Chharka-La (4,920 m). We continue on the trail descending along the side of the valley, then make a big drop into a side valley at 4290 m. We then make a long traverse down to the picturesque village of Chharka on the banks of Barbung Kola at (4,120 m). Chharka is a small hamlet of closely-built, white-washed dwellings, medieval in feel, with a Bon-po monastery, Sarchhen Gompa.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 20: Chharka – Norbulung (4750 m)

We follow the Chharka Khola to the intersection of the Thansan Khola, having to cross the river on a small bridge. The campsite right after this river crossing is Sumdo, and we may set up camp for the night here, or we may continue on to a campsite called Norbulung, down the east bank of the Thansan Khola.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 21: Norbulung - Sangda Phedi (4190 m)

We begin the day climbing to a yak pasture at Molum Sumna (4,860 m) and on to a crest at 5,130 m. We then make a long traverse across meadows to the foot of the Sangda-La, then a long, steep final climb to the pass at 5,460 m. Switchbacks descend down to our camp site by a stream at 5,100 m.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 22: Sangda Phedi – Sangda (3710 m)

We climb to a lower Sangda-La at 4990 m, and then descend through loose shale towards the village of Sangda Ghunsa (4190 m). We drop to the Chalung Khola, crossing it at 3,750 m, and then climb steeply up the opposite bank. A long high traverse leads to a cairn at 4,090 m, we then come to a set of steep switchbacks descends to a stream at 3,580 m. We do another climb to the compact settlement of Sangda, where we end a long day at 3,700 m.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 23: Sangda - Dhagarjun

From Sangda, we start climbing and spend most of the morning making a high traverse, crossing many ridges until we finally reach the 'pass' at 4,280 meters. From the crest, we have a magnificent vista, looking out to snow-capped peaks and down to Mustang's patch-work of trails and villages far below. Kagbeni, Jharkot, Muktinath, Thorung Peak., the Thorung La, Niligiri, Daulaghiri and the Kali Gandaki are all visible, an awe-inspiring site! From here, we descend quite steeply into the Kali Gandaki valley, reaching the fortress-like entrances to the small villages of Phalyak and nearby Dhagarjun, where we camp for the night.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 24: Dhagarjun – Jomsom

Sticking our heads out of tents to see the sunrise on Niligiri and Daulaghiri is something out of this world. Himalayan sunrises and sunsets remind us of why we've come all this way, and endured these hard, cold days! We climb to a small ridge, and then head directly south towards Jomsom, the district headquarters of Mustang, back to 'Civilization' on the Annapurna Circuit. We reach the long, cobbled path

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

that connects upper and lower Jomsom, along which beautiful textiles, woven on hand looms in the traditional style, and are displayed by Mustangi women. At the Trekker's Lodge in lower Jomsom, cold beers and hot showers, both well deserved, wait. We'll celebrate our wonderful journey through remote Dolpo in the evening with our fantastic crew, and hand out tips and bonuses.

Accommodation: Camping Tent

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 25: Fly to Pokhara

Take a short and somewhat adventurous flight from Jomsom to Pokhara which takes about 20-25 minutes. Upon arrival transfer to hotel in Pokhara.

Accommodation: Fish Tail Lodge

Meal: Breakfast

Day 26: In Kathmandu

Today is at leisure to give your body some much needed rest after a long and strenuous trekking. Just relax or go for last minute shopping in Thamel.

Accommodation: Hotel Manaslu

Meal: Breakfast

Day 27: Depart Kathmandu

Transfer to airport and depart for your homeward-bound flight.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin room sharing accommodation at all hotel/lodge as mentioned with daily breakfast
- Lodges/Guesthouses accommodation during the trek mostly in twin-share but occasionally in dormitory-style rooms

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner while on trek
- Domestic flights as per the itinerary (Baggage allowance of 15kg for your checked-baggage and a 5kg day pack/carry-on)
- An English speaking guide
- Licensed trekking guide and porters, plus a local Sherpa guide
- Entrance fees for monuments
- Personal insurance for trekking guide & porters during the trip
- A complementary trekking route map
- Applicable government taxes

Excludes

- International flights
- Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal clothing & equipment
- Tips for tour leader/guide, driver, hotel staff and porters
- Items of personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, showers and other unforeseen expenses
- Any item/service not mentioned under "included"

Accommodation

Hotel Manaslu, Kathmandu

Hotel Manaslu located in the immaculate area of Lazimpat, Kathmandu is a heritage hotel established in 1972. We have kept the proud heritage of Nepal alive throughout its operation by offering unparalleled service and warm hospitality, that defines the values and culture of Nepal. The architecture of our hotel includes many ancient pieces that have been carefully restored and incorporated.

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days



Siddhartha Hotel, Nepalgunj

Siddhartha Hotel is a Luxury Four Star property in Nepalgunj, with its multi storied building established in large area provides the magnificence of accommodation. This beautiful hotel is located between Ranjha Airport and Nepalgunj city, and offers a vast range of facilities such as luxury accommodation, restaurant, 24hrs room service, business center, fitness center, sauna, swimming pool, health club etc.

Camping Tent

Our classic A-frame or ridge tents are sturdy and have plenty of room for two people. We use water and windproof flysheet which help make the tent nice and cozy inside. To complete the setup we provide a high-quality form mattress together with an insulation pad so that you get a good sleep after a long tiring day.



Fish Tail Lodge, Pokhara

Fish Tail Lodge enjoys a unique location situated on a peninsula across Fewa Lake. Shuttle-floats or boats transport you across to the resort. With the lake on one side and a forest hill on the other, the views are spectacular. The panorama of Annapurna range and Mount "Machhapuchre" (Fish Tail), and their reflection on the lake soothe your soul and refresh your spirit.

Internal/Domestic Flight/s

Please note that adverse weather conditions at specially at Jhuphal and Jomsom airport occasionally mean that flights cannot operate.

Should there be a lengthy delay at the start of a trip we will aim to provide a shortened version of this trek, but if adverse weather conditions continue and the main objective of the trek becomes impossible to reach, an alternative trek to another region of Nepal will be offered. Should there be a significant delay at the end of your trek, we will endeavour to get you on the first flights to Kathmandu available. Should helicopters be able to fly, we will consider for these on a case-by-case basis to enable you to meet your international flight. In the case of persistent adverse bad weather, travel-to-nature Asia will help & assist you re-booking international flights, but please be aware that your booking on a 'Land Only' basis will be responsible for re-booking your onward travel and for any associated costs.

Group/Individual

You are traveling privately with your family & friends with our guide, cook & porters who are at your service throughout your trek. Our representative/Tour Manager in Kathmandu who will look after your transfers to and from the airport and will be around to answer other questions you may have about your trek.

An English-speaking Nepali Sherpa trekking guide will accompany you throughout the trek, who will be assisted by a porter (we assign one porter for every two guests). All our Trekking guides/leaders are highly experienced and professional. Our trekking guides are licensed by Department of Tourism, (Government of Nepal). They are trained by Nepal Academy of Tourism & Hotel Management (NATHM)

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

and also receive additional training through Dyckhoff-Karki Himalayan Nature Treks & Expedition.

Your trekking guide assisted by additional helper/porter as necessary to carry your baggage (kitbags/duffel). All your main gear is carried for you and you only have to carry whatever you require for that day's trek. Please limit your kitbag to maximum 15 kg only because a porter carrying weight limit is 30 kg maximum. All the trekking staff are insured by travel-to-nature Asia or Dyckhoff-Karki Himalayan Nature Treks & Expedition.

Accommodation - Hotel & Lodge

In this tour you spend your nights in comfortable hotels in Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Nepalgunj. While during the trek you will be staying in local lodges/teahouses.

The teahouses are basic but adequate; please be realistic about what to expect in the mountains. The hub of the teahouse is the dining room, usually decorated with colorful traditional rugs, sometimes with a stove or heater (some lodges charge a fee to put the heater on). Most teahouses sell snacks and other essentials such as tissues, soap and toilet paper. Almost all lodges have electricity but it is not wholly reliable and lighting may not be bright enough to read by – a head lamp/torch is essential. Electrical charging facilities are generally available only in the dining room (**charged at approx. Rs 150-350 per hour per device**). Many of the lodges use solar power so sometimes there is not enough electricity for charging. Many lodges have Wi-Fi these days – in some areas it works well but in others it is slow and temperamental.

We try our best to book a single/double bedroom throughout this trek for you. However, in some remote places we are not be in a position to guaranty a single room for you. Beds are with foam mattresses; bed sheets and a pillow are provided. Bedrooms are generally unheated and can get cold at night so you will need to bring or rent a sleeping bag.

Most lodges have only one or two basic toilets and sometimes these are located outside the main lodge building. Toilets are usually Asian 'squat' style; although many lodges have now installed 'western style' seated ones. Toilet paper is not provided so you should bring your own or buy it locally (please dispose of it the bin provided – do not put it in the bowl). If there is not a flush handle, there should be a container of water to pour down – if it is empty (or frozen) please either refill it or ask the lodge to.

Some lodges now have hot 'showers' (charged at approx. Rs250-500 per shower). Sometimes a hot shower is simply a bucket of hot water and not a shower head. Standards of cleanliness vary especially in the peak trekking season and in winter when the water freezes at night. Please report any problems to your guide or the lodge and be vigilant in your personal hygiene regime – use soap or hand sanitizer gel before and after toilet breaks, snacks and meal times.

As a general rule, the higher altitude you go to, the more basic & demanding the lodges and the more expensive food and services become.

Extra Accommodation

If you require any additional accommodation in Kathmandu either before or after the tour, we can book this for you (subject to availability), please enquire with our Sales Consultant/Tour Manager.

Single Accommodation

We offer double room accommodation for the nights in Kathmandu, Nepalgunj and Pokhara only, unless single room is requested. While in the teahouses, double rooms cannot be always guaranteed.

Food & Transport | Eating & Drinking

Only breakfast is included in Kathmandu, Nepalgunj and Pokhara and all meals (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner) are included throughout the trek. On trek the breakfast will be a set menu usually consisting of porridge, toast and egg. For lunch and dinner on trek

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

allowing you to choose what you want to eat and when. The menus in the lodges are almost identical to one another but offer a varied choice, ranging from traditional Nepalese dhal bhat to pizza and apple pie. **For every meal 2 cups of tea or coffee or each per meal is included. If you prefer to drink more than two cups you have to pay extra yourself.**

Dhal Bhat is the staple diet in Nepal and comes in many different forms but generally comprises some curried lentil dhal and meat or vegetables, some rice, and a pickle/chutney. Another popular snack is momos; a type of Nepalese dumpling, fried or steamed, filled with meat or vegetables. Although meat is available in the teahouses, we advise against eating it on trek. The meat has often been carried in the heat from lower altitudes for several days before reaching the lodges, and can cause stomach upsets or illness. Germs can also be spread by handling dirty money - we recommend using hand sanitizer.

Drinking Water

Staying hydrated is important when undertaking any physical activity but particularly so at altitude where it is generally recommended to drink at least 3-4 litres per person per day. We strongly encourage you not to buy bottled water on trek as this contributes to the growing problem of plastic pollution in Nepal's trekking areas.

All teahouses will provide cold water free of charge, if requested. Although this should not be drunk untreated, we recommend that you bring a reusable bottle with a wide opening with you and use a SteriPEN to treat it with. A SteriPEN is a handheld UV water purifier – small, lightweight and battery powered so easy to pack for a trek. In Nepal's trekking regions most of the bottled water isn't strictly 'mineral water' anyway but is UV treated, so it's exactly the same technology. It's quick to use, far more effective than purification tablets, and the water is ready immediately.

SteriPENS are widely stocked on Amazon, outdoor shops and other online retailers; look for the latest models but avoid USB charging ones. Better still, a

SteriPEN will pay for itself over the course of the trek and you won't leave behind a single plastic bottle – you will end up spending the same or even less than you would on bottled water, plus you can keep it for future trips. If you prefer not to invest in a SteriPEN, the teahouses also sell boiled water for **approx. Rs 150- 300 per litre (the price increases the higher you trek)** which should not require treating. This is also perfect for a bedtime refill as it can double up as a hot water bottle.

Transportation

For airport and sightseeing transfers, we use a private car. Flights to and from Pokhara and Kathmandu will be in ATR plane and to/from Jomsom and Jhuphal would be either in a Twin Otter or Dornier plane.

Weather

The main trekking season in Nepal is from mid-September to end-May. We do not operate treks in Nepal outside of these months as it is the rainy season. During the trekking season conditions at most altitudes are generally comfortable for walking and rain or snow are occasional occurrences. Daytime temperatures will vary from 15°C to 35°C in the Kathmandu Valley to around 10°C at 3,600m and progressively lower the higher you go. Within the trekking season there are three further distinct seasons in the weather, each offering different advantages for trekking.

Post Monsoon/autumn: Mid-September to November. This is the most popular trekking season in Nepal. Day temperatures in Kathmandu are generally above 20°C. On trek

temperatures will be lower although skies are usually clear and days should be sunny and mild with clear mountain views. However, at higher altitudes, the days can be cold and windy. Nights will be colder with temperatures dropping as low as to minus 10°C or lower in late November at the higher altitudes.

Winter: December to end February. Despite the colder conditions, this is an ideal time to trek in Nepal. Skies are usually very clear, especially in December and the mountain views are at their best. Nights will

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

be very cold with temperatures down to minus 20°C but days are often pleasant and sunny. In Kathmandu, maximum daytime temperatures are 19°C.

Pre-monsoon/spring: March to May. Both day and night temperatures will be warmer in general but haze will often build up in the afternoons. It is very hot in the lowlands and temperatures rise to 30°C in Kathmandu. Flowers bloom in this season and this is one of the reasons people chose to trek in spring.

Snow can be expected on any departure, usually at the higher altitudes. There will always be snow/ice on the top of the Cho La as it is a glacier.

Please remember that in any mountain area the weather is never wholly predictable and you should be prepared and equipped to deal with any differences in weather beyond the conditions described above.

WHAT TO TAKE

Essential Equipment

1. On trekking we assign one porter for every two guests and a porter carries about 30 kg (kitbags/duffel), therefore please respectfully limit your kitbag/duffel to 15 kg maximum. Any baggage/items not needed on trek can be left in storage at the hotel in Kathmandu free of charge. Please also see the internal/domestic flights weight limit to/from Jomsom and Jhuphal is 10 kg.
2. 2 passport photos for your trekking permit (plus an additional 1 if getting your visa on arrival)
3. 4 season sleeping bag (5 season for December, January and February departures)
4. 3/4 season jacket (4 season for winter departures)
 5. 1-2 x 1 liter water bottles (ideally with a wide opening.
 6. Waterproof synthetic or leather walking boots (worn in)

7. Waterproof jacket and trousers Gaiters
Trainers for the evening
8. Warm hat Scarf/Buff (which can be pulled over your nose and mouth to protect against fine mountain dust)
9. Warm gloves
10. Several pairs of walking socks
11. Tracksuit or thermals for the evening
12. Warm mid-layer (fleece)
13. Light - mid weight trousers (warmer for winter)
14. Shorts or skirt for women
15. Sunhat, sunglasses, sunscreen and lip salve with sun protection
16. Daypack
17. Towel
18. Head-torch (headlamp)
19. Trekking pole(s)
20. Plastic bags (bin liners) to line daypack and for packing clothing in the kitbag
21. Toilet paper
22. Small personal first aid kit
23. Plug adaptor

We believe in reducing our negative environmental impacts wherever possible, this goes for when you need to spend a penny in the great outdoors! If no facilities are available there may come a time when you need to go to the loo behind a tree/bush/rock. To avoid leaving toilet paper behind we recommend taking biodegradable dog poo/sandwich bags with you. Once you have done your business you can pop the used toilet roll in here and take it off the mountain or trail at the end of the day and dispose of it when there are appropriate facilities available.

Optional Equipment

1. Water treatment: SteriPEN / water purification tablets
2. Trekking pole(s)
3. Hand washing gel

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

4. Biodegradable soap/shampoo
5. Sleeping bag liner
6. Solar charger/spare batteries/power bank

There are many equipment shops in Kathmandu where you can buy much of the above clothing. The quality does vary and cannot be guaranteed so you should choose carefully. Internal Flights Weight Limit There is a weight restriction on the flight to and from Lukla of 10kg checked baggage plus 5kg hand luggage. It is not a problem for you to check in 1-2kg more than this as long as you are happy to pay an excess luggage charge (approx. €2 per kg).

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passport

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for European passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visa

Most nationalities require a visa for Nepal, which can be obtained in advance or on arrival. If you wish to apply visa before departure, please visit this link: <https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np/> The current cost of a visa on arrival is US\$30 for 15 days, US\$50 for 30 days and \$125 for 90 days. All are multiple entry. The visa on arrival fee can be paid in cash in US Dollars or Euros. Application forms are available in the immigration hall (or for electronic passports, there are visa registration machines which, after inserting your passport, automatically fill out a form for you. If you use the machine, you will not need a passport photo). You must first join the queue to pay the visa fee and then go to the relevant immigration desk to

obtain your 15, 30 or 90-day visa stamp. If you use the paper form to obtain a visa on arrival then you will also need one passport photo (a photo is not required if you use the electronic registration machines but we recommend you bring one with you anyway just in case, for any reason, the machines cannot read your passport). There might be long queues for visas on arrival.

Please note: Visa regulations can change without notice, therefore please check the current regulations or contact us.

Vaccination

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements. Recommended vaccinations are: Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid, Hepatitis A. There is low to no risk of malaria throughout Nepal and antimalarial tablets are not usually advised although may be considered for certain higher risk groups; you may wish to consult your GP/doctor or travel health clinic for further advice. The risk is highest in the low lying southern 'terai' districts bordering India.

A yellow fever certificate is only required if traveling from a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission or for travelers having transited for more than 12 hours through a country with risk of transmission.

Dengue fever is a known risk in Nepal. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for Dengue, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Most of our trips to Nepal go to high altitudes where there is a risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness. Our itineraries are designed to enable everyone to acclimatize to these altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible for you to be affected. Please refer to the information below on Altitude Warning for further advice on AMS.

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health, we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information.

Altitude Warning

This trek includes one or more nights over 3500 m above sea level, where there is a genuine risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). If left untreated AMS can be life-threatening. We expect most clients to experience some mild symptoms of altitude sickness, such as headaches and shortness of breath while walking or sleeplessness. Our guides (leaders) are trained to identify symptoms of severe AMS and if a guest requires extra care, arrangements such as rapid descent will be made immediately.

On some days this trip climbs faster than commonly published ascent rate recommendations. Based upon an assessment by our external safety and medical advisors and our risk assessment process, we consider the ascent rate is acceptable due to the additional safety measures that are in place for our customers. All our trips operating at high altitudes meet our internal altitude safety standards that minimize the risk of serious incidents occurring whilst travelling at altitude.

A number of medical conditions or medications can reduce your body's ability to acclimatize. This may affect your performance and make you more susceptible to AMS. If you are worried about any pre-existing conditions, such as heart conditions, or your overall physical ability, you must seek medical advice prior to your trip. The drug Diamox (also known as acetazolamide and normally only available on prescription) has been shown to aid acclimatization in some individuals and therefore may reduce the risk of AMS. Clients considering using Diamox should speak to their doctor about the drug, its side-effects and a prescription.

Please note that while we endeavor to assist all our clients in achieving their goals, there may be times when your leader decides to delay or stop your ascent based on your overall condition, or the onset of AMS.

Please note: that while we endeavor to assist all our clients in achieving their goals, there may be times when your leader decides to delay or stop your ascent based on your overall condition, or the onset of AMS.

We recommend you buy Travel Insurance, and make sure that your policy covers you up to the maximum altitude on this trip (if trekking in the Himalaya your policy should also cover the use of a helicopter for emergency medical evacuation). You must be fully insured against medical and personal accident risks (including repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). On arrival in destination for your trip, you will be asked to present details to your leader or local representative of your policy.

Local Time

Nepal's Time zone:
Asia/Kathmandu +04:45 (CET +04:45)

Electricity

Nepal's Electricity:
230V, 50Hz. Electric 'load shedding' (temporary power-cuts) might occur occasionally. On teahouse treks the majority of lodges now have electricity and charging facilities in the communal areas for batteries, for a fee (around Rs150- 350 per hour). Battery life can be affected by cold - lithium batteries are best.

Money

Nepal's Currency:
The national currency of Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee (NPR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 140 to the Euro and 130 to the US\$. It is illegal to import or export rupees, but foreign currency is not limited, provided it is declared on arrival. Keep your change receipts, as you will need them if you want to change rupees back into hard currency at Kathmandu airport.

ATM Availability

There are ATM machines in Kathmandu and Pokhara only. You can exchange cash in Pokhara as well.

Upper Dolpo Magic Trek | 27 Days

Please do not rely wholly on ATM machines as many are broken or have run out of money and all have a per day withdrawal limit of approximately €150-175 or US\$ 175-190.

We recommend you bring most of your money for the trek in cash and change it at the airport on arrival. Credit cards are accepted in many of the larger shops and restaurants in Kathmandu.

people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

It is illegal to import or export rupees, but foreign currency is not limited, provided it is declared on arrival. We recommend taking your personal spending money in cash (dollars or euros can all be changed easily). Cash can be changed easily at the airport on arrival in Kathmandu or at money changers in the Thamel area of Kathmandu. Please note that travellers cheques can NOT be exchanged in Nepal.

Please allow Rs1000-2000 (€7-14) per day for extra drinks, showers and charging on trek, and for meals not included in Kathmandu. This amount is given as a rough guideline only. If you plan to take a SteriPEN to treat non-boiled water on trek you will spend less than this, whilst if you buy imported snacks and drinks you may spend a few euro extra each day. There are teahouses selling drinks and snacks along the entire length of the trekking route.

Tipping

Tipping is of course entirely at your discretion, but it is part of the culture in Nepal. Tipping can be an awkward affair especially when you are not familiar with the country. Your leader will help with tipping and will provide a list of suggested tips. This will include tips for drivers, hotel porters and other hotel staff, local sightseeing guides, and if trekking will include staff such as guide, assistants and porters.

Important Information

On all guided trips although our leaders/guides are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other