

# UPPER DOLPO TO JOMSOM- GHT



Bönpo gompa (monastery) overlooking Phoksumdo Lake, Dolpo





# HIGHLIGHTS

- Our Upper Dolpo to Jomsom trek is an epic journey travelling past the stunning turquoise Phoksumdo Lake to Shey Gompa and to the villages of Upper Dolpo. With our itinerary you travel from Upper Dolpo on the trail out to Jomsom through a remote area near Tibet crossing a number of high passes. Most other groups trek the more popular Upper Dolpo Circuit that misses out some of the best places in the region.
- Upper Dolpo has been referred to as the last enclave of pure Tibetan culture with the landscape, culture and Buddhist religion of this region more like Tibet in pre Chinese times than the rest of Nepal. This region has a vast and rugged landscape inhabited by a hardy, enterprising folk who live in some of the highest villages in the world.
- This region is very rich in wildlife look out for herds of blue sheep, musk deer, Himalayan fox, marmots, eagles, lammergeier and of course the elusive snow leopard. Both our 2016 and 2015 groups were lucky to see snow leopards on this trek in Upper Dolpo.
- A special entry permit costing US\$810 is required to enter Upper Dolpo resulting in very few other trekkers visiting this remote region of Nepal.
- This trek to Upper Dolpo follows the same trail as portrayed in the film “Himalaya” directed by Eric Valli. This is a wonderful film and it would well be worth watching before coming to Nepal for inspiration. More information at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalaya\\_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalaya_(film))



# REASONS TO CHOOSE THE MOUNTAIN COMPANY FOR UPPER DOLPO.

- We are Himalayan trekking specialists and we have been operating trips in Nepal for many years. [Roland Hunter](#), owner and founder of The Mountain Company, has modified this itinerary based on his first-hand experience of the Dolpo region.
- Read our [AITO Traveller Reviews](#) received for Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT where our overall holiday rating is 100%. Our approach to organising trips in the Himalayas has helped The Mountain Company win awards such as [2018 Gold Award as AITO Tour Operator of the Year](#) and 2015 Bronze Award as AITO Tour Operator of the Year.
- The Mountain Company organised a successful Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT treks in May 2018, 2017, 2016, 2014 and 2010. Due to the remoteness and logistical challenges it is important to have a crew who have previously trekked in Upper Dolpo. Please see our [Trip Reports from our previous Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT](#) treks.
- In terms of time of year our view is that the best times to do this trek is starting from mid-May into June and during October, these dates give you a good chance of successfully crossing the high passes out to Jomsom.
- The Mountain Company will receive bespoke weather forecasts for the Dolpo region from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this trek.
- In our itinerary we have included a number of buffer days (Day 4) as well as rest days (Day 8, 12, 14 & 22) in case of any delays experienced along the way. These extra days will help your acclimatisation to the high altitude and also increases chances of completing the traverse in case of any delays flying into Juphal.
- Western branded tents are used for all of our camping treks in Nepal. These are three person domed tents with plenty of space for two people sharing plus gear.



- The Mountain Company is an accredited trek operator in the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) Alliance, this is a group of organisations and individuals who voluntarily adopt their Codes of Conduct.
- We send a Thuraya satellite phone on all of our treks in Nepal. It is essential for your guide to have reliable communications with us for logistics, planning and group safety. We use GPS on Thuraya satellite phone to upload daily your location on to Google Maps so your friends and family can track your progress during the trek.
- We bring a comprehensive first aid kit plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. There will also be a portable altitude chamber (PAC or Gamow bag).
- There will be a range of meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We bring along a supply of chocolate & muesli bars, Pringles, biscuits and nuts. For breakfast every morning we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.
- Pre trip support will be given by our Operations team in UK via email, phone or face to face meetings.

## TESTIMONIALS

“Trip met and exceeded my expectations. Before the trip I knew Upper Dolpo was special but its more than that. The cook and his assistants were exceptional. Ade is a top guy, faultless. Worst part of the trip was leaving Dolpo, the best part was viewing Shey Gumpa for the first time (gave me goosebumps), The Dolpo pa. Every day was great!” **Harry Jones (UK)**



# UPPER DOLPO TO JOMSOM

Total number of days	30 days
Grade & days trekking	Strenuous, 22 trekking days
Accommodation	4 nights hotel, 25 nights camping
2020 price from Kathmandu	£4,695 (US\$5,995 or €5,295)
2021 price from Kathmandu	£4,695 (US\$5,995 or €5,295)
	Note: this cost includes US\$810 for Upper Dolpo permits.
Minimum group size	6
Maximum group size	14
Dates	May 9 <sup>th</sup> to June 7 <sup>th</sup> 2020 ( <b>Guaranteed to run</b> ) September 26 <sup>th</sup> to October 25 <sup>th</sup> 2020 May 8 <sup>th</sup> to June 6 <sup>th</sup> 2021 September 25 <sup>th</sup> to October 24 <sup>th</sup> 2019

## THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- Internal flight from Kathmandu to Nepalganj & Juphal and at the end of the trek from Jomsom to Pokhara & onto Kathmandu.
- All transfers including airport collections.



- Twin share room in Kathmandu at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador and in Nepalganj at Hotel Siddhartha or Soaltee Western.
- Breakfast only in Kathmandu and Nepalganj, all meals included while on trek.
- Twin share tents while on trek using our three person Western branded tents.
- All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, tents, Western and Sherpa guide, porters and cook.
- Bespoke weather forecasts for Dolpo region from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this trek.
- Two Thuraya satellite phones for organising logistics and medical evacuations, it can also be also used for personal calls at extra cost.
- We use GPS on Thuraya satellite phone to upload daily your location onto Google Maps so your friends and family can track your progress during the trek.
- Restricted area permit for Upper Dolpo costing US\$810.
- Dolpo trekking map given to you on arrival to Kathmandu.
- Rubberised luggage tags posted to you before departure.
- Full financial protection for all monies paid to us through our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Operators Trust (our ABTOT membership number is 5365) and having an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (our ATOL number is 10921).
- Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company by email, phone or face to face meetings in London. After booking we will send our comprehensive "Nepal Pre Trip Information" notes.

## **THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:**

Single room supplement in Kathmandu and Nepalganj	£230 (US\$300 or €260)
Single tent supplement	£320 (US\$400 or €350)

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Skype ID: Rolandh1 / Email: [info@themountaincompany.co.uk](mailto:info@themountaincompany.co.uk) / [www.themountaincompany.co.uk](http://www.themountaincompany.co.uk)

Postal address: Westcott Farm, Chagford, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 8JF 9QG, United Kingdom



Please note that if you are a single person booking on one of our trips you do not have to pay the single room supplement, this is only payable if you specifically request to have a room or tent to yourself. You will not have to pay this for this option if you happen to end up with a single room or tent due to odd numbers on the trip.

## **THE FOLLOWING IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP**

- International flight to/from Kathmandu.
- Travel & trekking insurance.
- Nepal visa for 30 days.
- Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu and Nepalganj.
- Personal clothing & equipment, please see the Appendix for suggested kit list.
- Tips, an appropriate amount for Upper Dolpo trek would be 21,000 Nepalese rupees (approx. GBP150, US\$200 or 170 Euro) from each person into a group tip fund for distribution to the local crew.
- If you have to wait in Nepalganj at the beginning of the trip due to delays in flying into Juphal STOL mountain airstrip the cost for your overnight accommodation in Nepalganj is not included so you will have to pay extra for this.
- If there are cancellations with the airplanes flying into Juphal it may be possible to fly in a helicopter. There would be an extra cost for this service depending on which helicopter company is used and the demand at the time.
- Other items not listed in “What is included”.

## **PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

The Mountain Company carefully selects and screens potential participants applying to join our groups to ensure the trip is an appropriate objective for you. We have a number of pre-trip questions asking information about your outdoor experience, training, experience, medical conditions and fitness. To access the pre-

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trip questions please send in your application by clicking on the **“Apply now” button** on the trek webpage. After review of your replies we might contact you by telephone or email for further information to aid our selection process.

Please ensure you have done your own research about Upper Dolpo trek by reading our pre trip documents (Trip Dossier, Trip Grading and Trip Reports published on TMC blog) to ensure you have a realistic idea of what to expect. Every trip organised by The Mountain Company has been graded based on four factors: daily walking times, altitude, terrain and remoteness.

## INTRODUCTION

Our Upper Dolpo to Jomsom itinerary visits a remote region of Nepal, instead of following the more popular Upper Dolpo Circuit we head further north to an area very close to the Tibet border and then walked out on the challenging trail to Jomsom thereby completing one section of The Great Himalaya Trail (“GHT”).

Upper Dolpo has been referred to as the last enclave of pure Tibetan culture with the landscape and Buddhist religion of this region more like Tibet in pre Chinese times than that of the rest of Nepal. This region has a vast and rugged landscape inhabited by a hardy, enterprising folk who live in some of the highest villages in the world.

Upper Dolpo is a culturally Tibetan region in West Nepal and during the course of the trek we will visit many Buddhist and Bönpo (shamanistic pre Buddhist) monasteries. Up until 1996 foreigners were not allowed access to this region and as a result Dolpo-pa culture has largely been unaffected by tourism. Of particular interest is Shey Gompa, this is revered as one of most important in Upper Dolpo where twice a year pilgrims make a kora (or circuit) of Crystal Mountain known as a younger brother of Mount Kailash in Tibet.

Upper Dolpo was first written about by David Snelgrove in his book titled "Himalayan Pilgrimage" and more recently by Peter Matthiessen in "The Snow Leopard". This region was used as the location for Eric Valli's superb film "Himalaya".





## DETAILED ITINERARY

It is our intention to keep to the day by day itinerary detailed below, although there might be some flexibility due to local conditions or other factors beyond our control. If this is the case the trek leader will do everything possible to work out the changes to the itinerary in order to minimise your inconvenience.

### **Day 1. Arrive Kathmandu.**

You will be met on arrival at Kathmandu airport and driven back to the hotel. Please provide travel plans on booking and we will arrange the pick-up and transfer. A full briefing will be given by your trek leader in the afternoon. **Overnight at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador (Meals: none).**

### **Day 2. Fly to Nepalgunj.**

We take the flight to Nepalgunj in western Nepal, there are good views from right side of the plane as we fly close to the Himalayan mountains. Nepalgunj is the largest city in the Terai with a hot and humid climate. **Overnight at Soaltee Western Premium or Hotel Siddhartha (Meals: B).**

### **Day 3. Fly to Juphal, trek to Dunai (2,000m)- 3 to 4 hours walking.**

After an early morning start we take a charter flight to Juphal the main airport of the Dolpa district. After an exciting landing at the narrow STOL mountain airstrip we meet the trek crew. Once the porters have loaded up and after final preparations we start walking through terraced fields to the Thuli Bheri river and then up to the town of Dunai. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 4. Buffer day in case of any delays flying to Juphal.**

If buffer day is not used waiting for the flight to Juphal then these could be utilised if there are any other delays experienced during the trek.

### **Day 5. Trek to Chhepka (2,840m)- 7 hours walking.**

From Dunai we descend to cross a new suspension bridge at the confluence with Suli Gad River flowing down from Phoksumdo Lake. At Sulighat our permits will be checked at the entrance to Shey Phoksumdo National Park, this is Nepal's largest and the only trans-Himalayan National Park in Nepal covering an area of 3,555 square kilometres.



For the rest of the day we follow the turquoise Suli Gad, passing through thick forests of pine, fir trees and some giant red cedars. The hillside is covered with lush vegetation and it is likely you will see troops of langur monkeys. We pass the basic houses of Jyalhasa the winter settlement of the villagers from Ringmo. Further along we reach the grassy campsite at Chhepka in a small Tibetan village, look out for the local women who wear Tibetan turquoise, coral and amber necklaces. It should take about 3 ½ hours walking to lunch and in the afternoon a further 3 ½ hours to Chhepka. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 6. Trek to Amchi Hospital (3,110m)- 6 ½ hours walking.**

Today the trail switches over to both sides of the valley with crossings on good bridges sometimes we walk near the river and at other times on a narrow path high up in the gorge. We pass through forests of horse chestnut, larch and birch with several bamboo stands further up the valley.

By the afternoon the valley widens out and we pass a river confluence, one trail follows Pugma Khola to Jumla whereas we follow the Phoksumdo Khola heading north where we soon we reach a bridge that leads to Amchi Hospital. “Amchi” is name for traditional Tibetan medicine developed specifically for the climatic and cultural conditions of the Tibetan plateau. It should take about 4 hours walking to lunch and in the afternoon a further 2 ½ hours to Amchi Hospital. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 7. Trek to Phoksumdo Lake (3,600m)- 4 ½ hours walking.**

From Camp we pass Palam another deserted winter settlement then continue climbing for another hour to ridge at about 3,800 meters where we see the highest waterfall in Nepal flowing out from Phoksumdo Lake. The trail descends through a birch forest to the mud plastered chortens and mani walls at the entrance to Ringmo village, it is a short walk to the camp on the shores of the stunningly beautiful Phoksumdo Lake. It should take about 4 ½ hours walking to Phoksumdo Lake where you will have lunch. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 8. Rest & acclimatisation day.**

Today we visit the nearby Bönpo Buddhist monastery overlooking Phoksumdo Lake and then explore Ringmo village. Bönpos circumambulate chortens or other religious structures anticlockwise rather than clockwise as done by Buddhists.

**Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**



### **Day 9. Trek to Phoksumdo Lake North Camp (3,630m)- 4 to 5 hours walking.**

We enter Upper Dolpo beyond Ringmo where it is necessary to have the restricted area permit. This is a superb trekking day following the western side of Phoksumdo Lake along a narrow cliff trail, this is the “Devil’s trail” followed by Thinline in Erice Valli’s film “Himalaya”.

The narrow path ascends to a ridge with spectacular views over the turquoise lake to Ringmo village and the peaks of Kanjiroba (6,612m), Norbung Kang (6,085) and Jhyarko Dingla (5,892m). We make a gradual descent through stands of birch trees to our campsite on the northern shore of Phoksumdo Lake. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 10. Trek to Lar Tsa Camp (4,200m)- 7 hours walking.**

Leaving camp we follow a wide valley with braided tributaries of Phoksumdo Khola, after two hours of walking through pine and birch forest we pass Chunemba camp. Today we have a river crossing so it is a good idea to pack your sandals.

We have lunch at the river confluence, after we follow a high trail over a grassy ridge avoiding the narrow gorge and then join the Tuk Kyaksa Khola where it widens below Lar Tsa Camp. This area is well known for producing a lot of *Cordyceps sinensis* also known as caterpillar fungus (or “yarchagompa”). The fungus is a medicinal mushroom which is highly prized by practitioners of Tibetan and Chinese medicine in which it is used as an aphrodisiac and as a treatment for a variety of ailments from fatigue to cancer. In May and June each year many people travel to this area to collect yarchagompa, our pony man from our trek in 2010 reckons he made over US\$3,000 doing this last year!

There is a spectacular view of Kanjiroba Himal (6,612m) from Lar Tsa camp. We believe stopping here, rather than continuing onto Snowfields Camp, is essential for acclimatisation before crossing Kang La to Shey. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Important note:** if Kang La pass is blocked due to snow then the group leader will adjust the itinerary to try to find alternative passes to cross over to Shey gompa.

### **Day 11. Trek to Snowfields Camp (4,650m)- 3 to 4 hours walking.**

From Camp we continue walking up the valley with sporadic juniper and azalea before crossing the river on a bridge. We then climb a scree slope on a switchback



trail to a crest before descending to Snowfields Camp located next to the river, this Camp was named by Peter Mathiesson in his book “Snow Leopard”.

Snowfields Camp is at the foot of Kang La that crosses into Dolpo and in the afternoon it is a good idea to walk towards the pass to check conditions, this is also a useful acclimatisation walk that will certainly help with tomorrow’s walk. You are likely to see herds of blue sheep in this area. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 12. Rest & acclimatisation day at Snowfields Camp.**

Today is an essential rest and acclimatisation at Snowfields Camp before crossing the Kang La pass tomorrow. This will also give the guides a chance to check the condition of the pass and break trail through the snow if required. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 13. Cross Kang La at 5,380m, trek to Shey Gompa (4,400m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.**

Out of Camp cross the river then walk up grassy slopes to join the valley approaching Kang La. There are two passes one to the right is often snowy, in May 2010 we followed our mules and porters over the pass to the left. The trail is on loose, slatey scree so it is definitely a good idea to bring your trekking pole(s). It should take about 3 hours to reach the Kang La pass at an altitude of 5,380m, the panorama is spectacular with mountains in Tibet to north and huge massif of Dhaulagiri visible to east.

The descent from the pass is on soft scree making for a rapid descent down to Hubajung Khola where we have lunch. Shortly after the valley narrows to a gorge made of stratified orange rock, after an hour we pass a long mani wall and soon Shey gompa is visible down the valley. Shey is located at a river confluence under Crystal Mountain so called because of the veins of quartz, this is the holiest mountain in Dolpo and known as younger brother to Mount Kailash in Tibet. Twice a year pilgrims make a kora (or circuit) of Crystal Mountain, according to the lama the kora takes them 12 hours. Our camp is located below the gompa in a grassy area with several herders’ huts nearby. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 14. Exploration day at Shey Gompa.**

Today we have time to explore Shey gompa, relax and also do some laundry if you like. In the afternoon we recommend that you consider visiting Tsakang gompa



perched on cliff an hours walk from Shey. You are likely to see several herds of blue sheep along the trail, this section is also part of the pilgrims kora of Crystal Mountain. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 15. Cross Saldang La (5,060m), trek to Namgung (4,430m)- 7 hours walking.**

Walking out of Shey we head east following Sephu Khola passing many mani walls, several isolated fields and doksas (seasonal settlements for yak herders). After one hour we take a valley heading to the north east that approaches Saldang La through a narrow gorge, this opens up to a bowl with loose scree in varying hues of yellow and orange.

On top of Saldang La the panoramic view encompasses mountains to the north into Tibet, east to Mustang and west to Crystal Mountain and Kanjiroba. The landscape now resembles the arid Tibetan plateau with narrow gorges as seen in Upper Mustang. The scenery is spectacular with folded strata visible in the rocks from the tectonic uplift of the Asian plate.

Descend from the pass keeping left as the dusty trail traverses through hillsides with virtually no vegetation apart from a few isolated pin cushion mosses. The trail continues descending to a stream then contours further until you see the ancient red and white gompa perched on the cliffs above behind Namgung village. There are only a handful of stone houses in the village as well as a new monastery. Our Camp is outside the village below the entrance chortens and mani wall. It should take about 3 hours walking to lunch before the pass and in the afternoon a further 4 hours to Namgung. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 16. Trek to Tora Sumda (4,000m)- 7 hours walking.**

Out of camp the trail traverses high above Namgung village and there are good views back to Saldang La crossed yesterday. After a few hours of contouring we reached a crest where we can see Saldang village below and mountains in Tibet to the north, look out for eagles soaring high in the skies.

The Dolpo-pa (inhabitants of Dolpo) lead a precarious life in this harsh environment trying to grow what they can from this high, dry land as well grazing large numbers of yaks and goats. To make up their shortfall in food supply they trade with Tibet using large caravans of yaks, in the past they traded salt for grain although



nowadays is supplemented by manufactured Chinese goods and increasingly the profitable yarchagompa collected in the area.

In Saldang we will have lunch at Thinle's house from the film "Himalaya", in 2010 there was a lama in his fields carrying out a puja for rain. After lunch we take the high level trail to Karang village where the villagers will be busy ploughing and planting their fields. We descend to the valley level and walk along the river bank to our camp at Tora Sumda at the confluence of Wagon Khola and Panzang Khola.  
**Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 17. Trek to Mischagaon village (4,200m)- 6 ½ hours walking.**

Today is one of the highlights of the trek following one of the most culturally interesting regions on the trek visiting a valley close to Tibet rarely seen by other trekkers. This valley is very rich in wildlife, look out for herds of blue sheep, musk deer, Himalayan fox and snow leopard (in May 2010 we met an American group who saw a snow leopard an hour earlier).

Shortly after Camp we cross the new bridge over Panzang Khola to the north bank. At Yangur village we will visit Dolpo's oldest gompa surrounded by mani walls and nine chortens, after the village the valley narrows to a beautiful gorge with orange and yellow rock.

It is not possible to follow the Panzang Khola direct to Shimen village instead we have to bypass this precipitous gorge by crossing Muri La to the north. Tonight we Camp in a field on the outskirts of Mischagaon village (or also known as Mugaon). It should take about 4 hours walking to lunch and in the afternoon a further 2 ½ hours to Mischagaon. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 18. Cross Muri La (5,030m), trek to Chanpola Goth near Shimen village (4,250m)- 5 hours walking.**

From camp walk through Mischagaon village then start ascending the slopes behind on a good trail up to Muri La. Looking south-west there are a number of 6,000m plus peaks Tshu Kalpo Kang Serku Dholam and Tripura Thumba and from the pass there are superb views over to Dhaulagiri. It should take about 3 hours to complete the long ascent to the pass and 2 hours to descent to Chanpola Goth.

There is a steep and loose descent from the pass so it is a good idea to bring your trekking pole(s). After dropping 500m we will stop for a lunch on a grassy area



near a river, then from there follow a gorge passing a small waterfall to Chanpola Goth. Heading north from here there is a trail to Tibet where there is frequently trading between Dolpo-pa and Tibetans. Camp is in a grassy area next to a yak herders' settlement, if you like you can do some laundry in the afternoon in the nearby river. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 19. Trek to Tinje village (4,180m)- 8 hours walking.**

From Camp it takes 1 hour to walk down the valley to Shimen village well shaded with groves of willow, this village has large areas of terraced fields planted with buckwheat, barley and potatoes. Look out for the new school and the mani wall over 600m long. The Panzang valley is one of the four main valleys that comprise Upper Dolpo, the others being Tarap, Nangkhong and Tsharka.

After an hour we walk up a tributary river underneath overhanging conglomerate then climb up to reach Mendo Camp on a grassy shelf. Shortly you will see Pu gumpa on the other side of the river, follow Panzang Khola for a further 1 ½ hour to our lunch spot next to Namygal chorten. After lunch the valley widens and after several hours we get to the hamlet of Phalwa inhabited by Tibetans where the men have red sashes in their hair.

Soon after we arrive to Tinje, this is a major village in a wide valley with extensive fields with two gompas and an old fort. The famous Dolpo-pa artist Tenzing Norbu Lama was born in this village, at a young age he trained in the art of traditional Tibetan thangka painting. Now Norbu's artwork has been exhibited internationally and through Drokpa, a nonprofit organisation, has been involved in helping to train villagers from Tinje to paint and produce handcraft leather goods. To get to our camp for the night we walk past the disused airstrip then descend to a grassy area by the river. It should take about 4 hours walking to lunch and in the afternoon a further 4 hours to Tinje. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 20. Trek to Rapka (4,550m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.**

Follow Panzang Khola past ruins of an old settlement on the other side of the river, after two hours we arrive to river confluence where we take the left tributary Kehen Khola for a further hour to reach our lunch spot in gassy area next to the river.

After lunch we continue walking up left bank of Kehen Khola passing several doksas before arriving to Rakpa where we camp for the night. It should take about



3 hours walking to lunch and in the afternoon a further 3 ½ hours to Rapka.

**Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 21. Cross Chharka La (5,015m), trek to Chharka (4,300m)- 8 hours walking.**

We leave camp early for the longest day of the trip. From camp we walk up valley after ½ hour cross Kehen Khola, in May we hopped over the river on rocks whereas if here in Autumn you should bring sandals as the water level likely to be higher at that time of year. At the confluence near a yak herder's camp we take the left river Myantoku Khola, this valley then opens out to a wide floodplain with a number of tributary rivers that we have to cross several times.

We start climbing to reach a cairn at 4,950m then the valley widens again with many yaks grazing on the extensive pastures. From here you should be able to see the cairn and trail climbing to Chharka La. It should take another hour to reach summit of the pass where we rewarded with a spectacular view, after a short descent the huge Dhaulagiri massif is revealed on the right. The gradual ascent to the pass took 5 hours walking and from there it is a further 3 hours walk to get to Chharka village.

On descent of the pass the trail contours high above Chharka Tulsu Khola several times descending then climbing out of side valleys. After passing the entrance chortens and the school you then enter the old village with narrow alleys and their courtyards filled with goats, horses and yaks. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 22. Exploration day at Chharka village.**

Today you can explore the village or just relax before tackling the challenging days ahead crossing Sangda La passes out to Jomsom. We will also visit the two gompas, Buddhist and Bönpo, representing the two religions of Dolpo. This day could also be used as a buffer in case of any delays experienced so far along the way. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 23. Trek to Norbulung (4,750m)- 6 ½ hours walking.**

Below Chharka village we cross Chharka Tulsu Khola on a metal box girder bridge and then at river confluence cross on a suspension bridge to follow left bank of Thasan Khola. The trail contours high above the river following a number of





undulating ridges, after crossing a landslip zone we then descend to a grassy area for lunch.

After lunch we continue walking up the valley where the gorge narrows and after you reach the doksa at Norbulung. It should take about 4 ½ hours walking to lunch and in the afternoon a further 2 hours to Norbulung. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 24. Cross higher Sangda La (5,515m), trek to Sangda Phedi (5,100m)- 7 ½ hours walking.**

After an early start around 6am from Norbulung Camp we pass through the high yak pastures of Molum Sumdo and then continue to a crest with a cairn at just over 5,100m. From here it is a further two hours to reach Sangda La walking across a grassy plateau with grazing yaks, we then start climbing the trail to the important Sangda La pass marking the boundary between Dolpo and Annapurna.

The trail descends on loose scree to our Camp at Sangda Phedi next to Bheri Khola, this is our highest camp of the trek so it will be a cold night. It should take about 6 hours walking from camp at Norbulung to the summit of Sangda La and a further 1 ½ hours to descent to Sangda Phedi. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 25. Cross lower Sangda La (5,035m), trek to Sangda (3,800m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.**

From camp follow Bheri Khola for 45 minutes then contour up and climb the lower Sangda La at 5,035m. The mountain vista is superb over to Kali Gandaki valley and Thorong La plus a range of 6,000m peaks including Tongu Himal and Mukot Himal.

There is a steep descent from the pass on a loose, slatey trail that crosses a crest with cairn at 4,800m then there is a further descent to a big rock at 4,500m. From here there are two trails one to the right is direct and steep that most porters will take whereas the longer trail to the left passes a waterfall then has a short climb to a saddle. From here descend to a grassy plateau with pine trees then turn right along a new trail that is exposed in places to the new suspension bridge at 3,900m. We will have lunch by the bridge, this morning's walk should take 3 ½ to 4 hours from camp.



After lunch there is steep climb then the trail traverses high above Kyalunpa Khola, after an hour we cross a crest with prayer flags at 4,150m. We descend through a steep gully to cross the first tributary river at 3,800m then we traverse for ½ hour to the second river again crossing on rocks. Soon after you will see the entrance chorten to Sangda village followed by a large wall around their fields, this is a compact village to maximise the amount of fields.

Look over to the other side of the valley and you will see the deserted remains of two villages abandoned when their water supply dried up, this brings home the precarious nature of living in this area. We set up camp in the school ground above Sangda village. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 26. Trek to Pangling (2,900m)- 7 to 8 hours walking.**

From Sangda we start climbing to the first ridge at 4,050m then traverse to the second ridge at 4,120m. The trail descends into a U shaped hanging valley full of grazing yaks looking up this valley there is the peak of Tasartse 6,343m soaring above. The water supply for Sangda village is taken from the stream in this valley.

After 1 ½ hours you reach a third ridge at 4,250m, from here it is worth taking a look back up the valley where you can now see both higher and lower Sangda La passes crossed over the last few days. It is a further ½ hour to the fourth ridge where there is a good view of Kali Gandaki valley and Thorong Peak. At the tenth ridge or Jeula Danda you get a spectacular vista encompassing Thorong Peak, Nilgiri and Annapurna. It is worth walking 100m to a cairn above his pass to get views into Upper Mustang as well as down to Muktinath and Kagbeni.

From here we have a long traverse heading south, we descend to a river gorge then continue to eleventh ridge where we have views of the green fields of Pangling where we camp tonight. As there is no water source for a lunch spot we will take a pack lunch for today's walk. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

#### **Day 27. Trek to Jomsom (2,670m)- 3 to 4 hours walking.**

Today we follow the trail down through the main valley by crossing Kali Gandaki river and walk along the road to Jomsom. After checking into one of the lodges you can explore the town then in the evening the cooks will produce a special last meal together. Later on we will hand out tips to our crew as a thank you for all their hard work throughout the trek. **Overnight teahouse lodge (Meals: B,L,D).**



### **Day 28. Fly to Pokhara & Kathmandu.**

We take an early morning flight to Pokhara then onto Kathmandu. **Overnight at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador (Meals: B).**

**Day 29. Spare day in Kathmandu. Overnight at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador (Meals: B).**

**Day 30. Fly back home.**

## **YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION**

The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd (trading as The Mountain Company) is a fully licensed and bonded tour operator. For flight inclusive packages sold to UK residents these will be covered by our Air Travel Organisers Licence (our ATOL number is 10921). For packages that do not include flights and for packages sold to customers outside of the UK your financial protection is covered by our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Organisers' Trust ("ABTOT"). Our ABTOT membership number is 5365.



Our membership of these organisations means that you can book with us in complete confidence that all monies paid to us for trips are protected.

## **THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

Participants should be aware trekking, mountaineering and travelling in a developing country are activities that involve a risk of personal injury or death. As a

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condition of booking you must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement.

Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions, unpredictable weather and last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. The ability to work in team is an important aspect of all of our trips.

As a part of our planning process we have performed a detailed threat and risk assessment for our Upper Dolpo trek. It is worth pointing out all of our trips have a certain degree of risk, this is of course part of the attraction of adventure travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. However by identifying the potential hazards on Upper Dolpo trek we can assess the level of risk and implement control measures to reduce this happening.

Our full threat and risk assessment for Upper Dolpo trek is available to clients on request. For your information we have listed below a summary of the significant risks and hazards identified by us:

- Falls and trips resulting in physical injury eg. slipping on ice or falling off the path.
- Altitude illness including but not limited to AMS, HACE and HAPE.
- Getting lost or becoming separated from group eg. crossing passes in whiteout.
- Severe bad weather and conditions when camping.
- Climatic injuries (dehydration, sun burn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia or heat stroke).
- Crossing a river with no bridge resulting in drowning and/ or a fall.
- Rock fall and landslides.
- Snow and ice avalanches eg crossing Kang la pass.
- Lightning strike.
- Wildlife, pack animals (eg. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals have been known to knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite, we advise you discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.



- Earthquake.
- Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
- Endemic local diseases. We advise you discuss vaccinations with your doctor before departure.
- Physiological injury such as heart attack, appendicitis, hernia, toothache etc. in a remote area.
- Road traffic or flight accident [*see paragraph “Jomsom and Juphal flight” for further information about STOL flights*].
- Contaminated food and/ or water.

This trip visits a remote area where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation evacuation could take up to several days and may impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the most usual means of evacuation, however they are not always available or they may be hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

## THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS (“AITO”)

The Mountain Company is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) and we have agreed to abide by the terms of the AITO Quality Charter.

AITO is the Association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating. For more information please take a look at <http://www.aito.com/>



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# ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Mountain Company is committed to adopting a responsible attitude to the areas we visit. We are guests of the communities visited and with some thought and care we can ensure that everyone benefits from the experience. We have developed a Responsible Tourism policy which aims to ensure that The Mountain Company and its clients act in a way that is socially, environmentally and culturally sound.

In 2017 the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) launched Project PROTECT in recognition of the important role that destinations play in the future of the travel industry. The aim of this project is to encourage sustainable tourism and to nurture the destinations for tomorrow's travellers. The PROTECT acronym stands for People / Resources / Outreach / Tourism / Environment / Conservation / Tomorrow.

This project is led by Professor Xavier Font of the University of Surrey and each AITO member has to publish an annual pledge and report back at the end of the year on how they got along. To see The Mountain Company's Project PROTECT pledges for 2018 and 2017, please take a look at our [Sustainable Tourism page on AITO website](#).



We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group and abide by their five guidelines for porter protection, their website is at [www.ippg.net](http://www.ippg.net). We also have partnered with Kathmandu Environmental Education Project in Nepal, their website is at [www.keepnepal.org](http://www.keepnepal.org)

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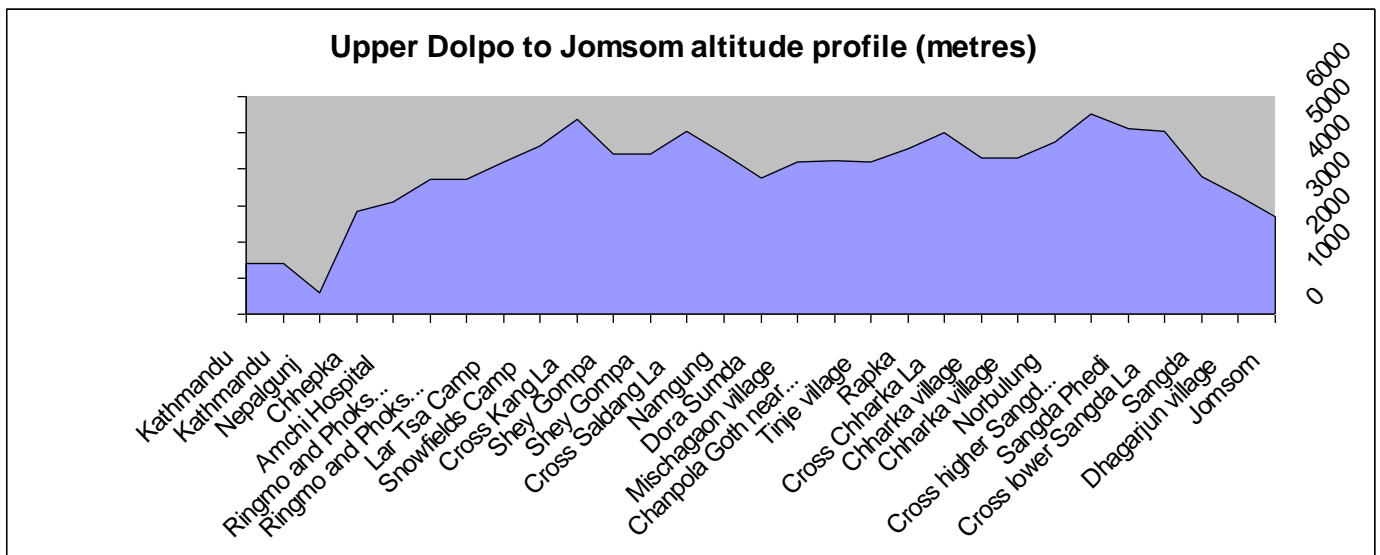
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# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## ALTITUDE AND ACCLIMATISATION

Our Upper Dolpo itinerary has been designed for gradual acclimatisation to take place, take a look at the altitude profile for the itinerary below:



There are ways of helping the acclimatisation process, as described below:

- Walk slowly: there is plenty of time included in the itinerary so there is no need to rush, go at your own pace and enjoy the incredible views!
- Drink lots of water: it is easier for your body to acclimatise when hydrated so drink water and avoid coffee, tea and alcohol.
- Consider taking diamox (acetazolamide): before using this drug we recommend consulting a doctor and thoroughly researching the pros and cons.

Please remember even the fittest and healthiest person can develop one of the altitude illnesses: AMS (acute mountain sickness), HACE (high altitude cerebral edema) and/ or HAPE (high altitude pulmonary edema). The symptoms of these



illnesses are listed below, if any of these occur when you are on trek please immediately tell your guide.

### **Symptoms of AMS:**

- Tiredness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or if severe, vomiting
- Poor sleep

### **Symptoms of HACE:**

- Usually preceded by AMS
- Like “Severe AMS” also with severe headache unresponsive to painkillers; confusion and physical clumsiness (ataxia).

### **Symptoms of HAPE:**

- Fluid in the lungs: cough, tiredness, breathlessness out of proportion to exercise especially at rest and worse when lying flat.
- Often symptoms start later (at night or after 24 to 48 hours at new altitude).
- Often occurs without AMS (often no headache)
- But you can have AMS and HACE too.

If you have symptoms of altitude illness (AMS, HACE or HAPE) you must not ascend in altitude. If you have HACE or HAPE you must descend to nearest health post (if available) or seek medical help.

If you have only mild symptoms of AMS you should rest, drink fluids, try to eat, keep warm. If symptoms go away then you can go up. If symptoms get worse you have to descend in altitude escorted by one of our guides (someone with altitude illness must never descend alone).

For further information we suggest you take a look at the following websites:





High Altitude medicine website:

<http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com>

Medex Travel at High Altitude:

<http://www.medex.org.uk/v26%20booklet.pdf>

BMC website:

<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/Feature.aspx?id=1746>

## COMMUNICATIONS

We bring a Thuraya satellite phone for logistical, safety and personal use. Personal calls charged at £4 (US\$5) per minute and £2 (US\$3) to send and receive SMS text.

## ACCOMMODATION IN KATHMANDU

For our Upper Dolpo trek we use several hotels in Kathmandu depending on availability. They are as follows:

**Hotel Tibet** is located in Lazimpat next to the Radisson. Hotel Tibet is our usual hotel for our standard trips in Nepal as our clients enjoy staying at this property due to its good location, comfortable rooms and high level of service. There is a garden terrace next to the restaurant on the ground floor and the roof terrace with the Yeti Bar overlooking the city. For more information on Hotel Tibet please take a look at their website <http://www.hotel-tibet.com/> .

**Hotel Ambassador** is located in Lazimpat not far from Hotel Tibet and Manaslu. This hotel was rebuilt and opened in Spring 2017 with well-appointed rooms including both King size and twin beds, complimentary wifi, tea & coffee, iron & board, combined bath & shower. The rooms are a good size at 30m<sup>2</sup> and are well decorated with original art. The rooms have air conditioning and are sound proofed for quiet nights rest. For more information on Hotel Ambassador please take a look at their website: <http://www.ambassadornepal.com/>

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There are store rooms at all of these hotels where you can leave luggage not required while on trek. There is also a security safe at these hotels for storage of valuables.

## **FOOD**

In Kathmandu there is a wide range of excellent restaurants, please read our Nepal Pre Trip information document for our recommendations. Breakfast is provided each morning by the hotel.

While on the trek, the cook will provide good quality food in sufficient quantities. For breakfast you are likely to get porridge or cereal, toast or chapattis, omelettes and a range of hot drinks. For our Camping treks in Nepal we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine. On arrival to Camp in the afternoon you will be given tea and biscuits and a three course meal will follow later in the evening.

## **JOMSOM AND JUPHAL FLIGHT**

Please note that flights to and from Nepal's Short Take-Off & Landing ("STOL") mountain airstrips such as Jomsom and Juphal are dependent on the weather. Delays often happen if there is poor visibility or high winds.

If you have to wait in Nepalganj at the beginning of the trip due to delays in flying into Juphal STOL mountain airstrip the cost for your overnight accommodation in Nepalganj is not included so you will have to pay extra for this. If there are cancellations with the airplanes flying into Juphal it may be possible to fly in a helicopter. There would be an extra cost for this service depending on which helicopter company is used and the demand at the time.

In all of our itineraries visiting areas with STOL mountain airstrips such we include one extra day in Kathmandu at the end of the trip in case of delays flying back. If you are delayed longer than this our office in Kathmandu can help reschedule your international flights however there is likely to be a fee charged by the airline for this. You will also have to pay for all of your additional costs incurred in Kathmandu as a result of the delay such as accommodation and meals.



British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (“FCO”) travel advice to Nepal states that “STOL airstrips in Nepal are among the most remote and difficult to land on in the world and are a challenge for even the most technically proficient pilots and well-maintained aircraft.” For their latest advice please take a look at their Safety & Security section under Air Travel, link at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nepal/safety-and-security>

There have been a number of air accidents in Nepal and The European Union banned all airlines based in Nepal from flying in the 28-nation bloc under the latest changes to a list of unsafe carriers. For more information on Nepal’s air safety profile take a look at Aviation Safety Network, link at: <http://aviation-safety.net/database/country/country.php?id=9N>

## **A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK**

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the cook’s helpers. Before heading over to the mess tent for breakfast it is best to pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the tents will be packed away and, after the porters have arranged their loads, they will set off on the trail in the cool of the morning.

After breakfast probably around 8am we start walking. The pace of the trek is leisurely with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. Lunch will be around 11am at a spot by the side of the trail and is prepared for us by the cooks.

There is more walking after lunch and normally you will get into Camp by mid-afternoon with the tents already put up by the local staff. In the evening a three course meal is served in the mess tent around 7pm. After supper the western leader will discuss the plan for the next day with the group. People might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day’s events for a while before retiring to their tent for the night.



## CLIMATE

In terms of time of year our view is that the best time to do this trek is during the month of May, this gives you the best chance of crossing the high passes out to Jomsom. September is probably more popular with trekking groups however often the passes are icy making travel impossible for the pack animals.

This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and the time of day. In the mountains over 3,000m the nights will be cool, normally around 5°C, and during the day temperatures sometimes rise to 25°C. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15°C to -10°C.

## CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

A list of clothing and equipment for the Upper Dolpo trek has been included in the Appendix below. It is worth pointing out that you will need a sleeping bag for this trip although you can arrange to rent one in Kathmandu.

If you do not have the clothing and equipment contained in this list then a good option might be to rent from the UK. Trek Hire and Expedition Kit Hire rent out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying. The links to their websites are at <http://www.trekhireuk.com/> and <http://www.expeditionkithire.co.uk>

Alternatively if you are going to buy then please contact the office for the Cotswold Outdoor promo code that entitles you, as a client of The Mountain Company, to a 15% discount in their stores and online.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for items required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks.

The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel bag or backpack will be carried by a porter. **The maximum weight allowance is 15kgs.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification



## VISA REQUIREMENTS

All foreigners require a visa for entry into Nepal. It is your responsibility to obtain the entry visa. You can get from a Nepalese embassy overseas or on arrival in Nepal. Most people will obtain their visa on arrival to Kathmandu airport. Please read our Nepal Pre Trip information document for more details about getting your Nepal visa.

## VACCINATIONS AND MEDICAL

You should obtain professional advice from a travel clinic or your local GP about which vaccinations to have before you arrive in Nepal. A dental check-up is a good idea as there will be no dental facilities while on the trek.

We bring a comprehensive first aid kit including high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. Please get in contact with us if you would like to see the list of medicines contained in our medical kits.

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

The Mountain Company does not book international flights for our holidays. Instead all package prices are Land Only with services starting from arrival to the destination country.

If you would like help arranging flights then we suggest you contact our partner travel agent, StudentUniverse (ATOL registered) a specialist division of the Flight Centre Travel Group ---> [Get an online quote](#)

## INSURANCE

Travel insurance for any Mountain Company itinerary is a condition of booking a holiday. At the very least you should have emergency medical and repatriation insurance which must include the cost of mountain rescue. Cancellation insurance is strongly recommended as all deposits paid to The Mountain Company are non-refundable.

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Please carefully check your insurers' Terms and Conditions in particular you should make sure the following is covered: 1) Activity (i.e touring, trekking or mountaineering) 2) Maximum altitude reached on trek 3) Helicopter evacuation in an emergency.

It is important for you to understand that ultimately the burden of any expense incurred in evacuation and repatriation procedures will be borne by you and that it is your responsibility to pay any costs incurred in respect of any evacuation or for medical treatment. You should be fully aware of the implications involved in arranging your own travel insurance and understand the limitations and exclusions of your policy.

You should be aware that under certain circumstances, The Mountain Company leader (or our local agent, if no western leader) might instigate rescue proceedings via helicopter (or any other means necessary) in situations of medical emergency without first contacting your insurance company for their approval.

The Mountain Company has arranged travel and trekking insurance for European Union residents with the specialist insurance broker **Campbell Irvine**. Their insurance policy will cover you for most of the trips in our portfolio. However if your trek is classified or graded by The Mountain Company as "**Strenuous**" or "**Challenging**" then you must make sure you select this option when obtaining an online quote for your insurance. Campbell Irvine will not provide insurance cover for any trips classified as "**Mountaineering**".

**CAMPBELL IRVINE**  
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

To apply for an online quote through [Campbell Irvine's Direct Travel Insurance](#) website. Should you have any questions regarding the terms and conditions of cover please contact Campbell Irvine on 0207 938 1734 or email [info@campbellirvine.com](mailto:info@campbellirvine.com)

We have [listed on TMC website a comprehensive list of specialist adventure travel insurers](#) that our trekkers from UK, EU and Internationally based have used in the



past. Please carefully check their Terms & Conditions prior to purchase. These companies are not necessarily recommended by us so it is your responsibility to ensure you have appropriate coverage.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

For those of you who are visiting Nepal for the first time we have provided some cultural information to help you fit in and feel at ease:

- The dress code is important for both men and women. Men and women should wear trousers rather than shorts while trekking.
- There are hot springs, rivers and lakes where it is pleasant to take a dip, it is fine for men to go bare-chested while bathing but they should not go nude. Women should try and be as modest as possible in these situations. Note: the locals do not allow swimming in Phoksumdo Lake please respect this while on trek.
- Hindus are concerned about the ritual pollution of food when it is touched by someone outside their caste or religion. Therefore, do not touch any cooked foods on display and when drinking from a container used by others avoid touching your lips to it. Do not eat food with your left hand and make sure you only give or receive food with your right hand.
- Shoes are considered degrading so keep them on the ground and remove them before putting your feet on anything. If you enter a Nepali house follow the example of your host in deciding whether to remove your shoes but on entering a temple or monastery you should definitely remove them.
- You will pass Buddhist mani walls, chortens, and stupas along the trek and to follow local traditions you should pass them on your right.
- When visiting a monastery or gumpa it is customary to give a donation for its upkeep.



## SUGGESTED READING

High Frontiers: Himalayan Pastoralists in a Changing World by Kenneth Bauer [this is highly recommended, it is available in Pilgrim's Bookshop in Kathmandu]

The Snow Leopard by Peter Matthiessen

Stones of Silence by George Schaller

Himalayan Pilgrimage by David Snellgrove

Himalaya DVD by Eric Valli

Beyond the Clouds: Trekking in the Hidden Land of Dolpo by Phil Druker.

### **Altitude and acclimatisation information and advice**

Going higher Oxygen, man and mountains by Charles Houston, MD

The High Altitude Medicine Handbook by Pollard and Murdoch

Medicine for mountaineering by James Wilkerson, MD

## MAPS

Upper and Lower Dolpa 1:125,000 by Nepal Map Publisher Pvt. Ltd [by far the best available to this region]. **This map will be included in your welcome pack when you arrive in Nepal.**





# APPENDIX

## CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST FOR UPPER DOLPO

For the safety of everyone in the group and to help ensure a successful trek, you are required to have the following items in our clothing and equipment list tailored for Upper Dolpo trek. Your gear will be checked by the group leader in Kathmandu prior to departure for the trek.

As a reminder, the weather on this trek will vary season to season and day to day as you ascend to higher elevations. During the first couple of days on Upper Dolpo trek you will experience hot conditions with temperatures around 25°C. You will experience the coldest temperatures in Sangda Phedi at an altitude of 5,100m where overnight lows will be down to around -12°C

### **Footwear:**

- Walking boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support.
- Walking socks.
- Trail shoes or trainers. For use around camp.
- Sandals. This will be required for river crossings on the trek.

### **Clothing:**

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar). For use if it rains or snows during the trek.
- Trekking trousers. Minimum two pairs of trousers.
- Long sleeve shirts (not cotton). Minimum two shirts.
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece.
- Sleeveless/ gilet or body warmer type fleece. This will help keep your core warm while not bulking when layering up. Gilet fleece can be used in combination with



base layers, other fleeces and down jacket to provide maximum warmth and insulation.

- Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Fleece pants. To be worn around camp or added as an additional layer when the temperatures start to drop higher up.
- Medium weight down jacket (eg. The North Face Nuptse jacket 700 fill)

#### **Handwear:**

- Fleece gloves.
- Warms mittens and/or gloves.

#### **Headwear:**

- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf. (eg. Buff Headwear check out <http://www.buffwear.com>). This is essential to bring on trek in Upper Dolpo in order to cover one's mouth as it can be dusty on the trail especially if there is high wind.
- Head torch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses. The lenses need to be Category 4 rated and should have side protection or wraparound design to prevent light getting through to your eyes that could cause sun blindness.

#### **Trekking gear for crossing the passes:**

- Trekking poles (Black Diamond with "Flick Lock" are best). Having two poles is mandatory as required for your safety on steep and loose sections of the trail and for walking through deep snow higher up.
- Kahtoola Microspikes or YakTrax Summits. These are for your safety and security when descending passes if snowy or icy conditions, for more information please take a look at: <https://kahtoola.com/product/microspikes/> and <https://yaktrax.implus.com/products/traction/yaktrax-summit-ice-shoes>



- Gaiters. A pair of knee high gaiters used to keep boots dry if walking through deep snow or on wet ground.

### **Personal Equipment:**

- Sleeping bag. Maximum overnight lows at Sangda Phedi will be around -12 Celsius. Note: it is possible to rent a bag in Kathmandu from Shonas Rental.
- Fleece or silk liner for your sleeping bag. A liner protects your sleeping bag from getting dirty and helps by adding extra insulation to keep you warm at night.
- Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest). On trek we provide everyone with one foam mat however we recommend two layers for maximum insulation and comfort.
- Daypack. Recommended size is 40 litres as you need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing for days crossing the high passes. It is also a good idea to bring a pack cover to keep the contents dry if it rains.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised. Or even better are fold-drybags such as from Exped.
- Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- Pee bottle. Highly recommended as means you do not have to get up to find toilet tent at night! For men you can use an old water bottle for women take a look at SheWee at <http://www.shewee.com/>
- Sunscreen and lip salve with a high SPF. As the environment in Upper Dolpo is dry and arid we also recommend bringing skin moisturiser and lip balm for use in the evenings.
- Insect repellent (for Nepalganj).
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Books, ipod and cards etc.
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.



- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer (optional).

### **Travelling:**

- Duffle bag or large backpack for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Bring a small combination padlock to secure the bag.
- Travel clothes. You will need casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Kathmandu.
- Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

### **Personal first aid kit:**

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best).
- Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.
- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).