

Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT



TRIP TYPE: Trekking
TRIP GRADE: Strenuous
TRIP STYLE: Camping

TRIP LEADER: International Leader
GROUP SIZE: 5 - 14 people
NEXT DEPARTURE: 08 May 2021

Our Upper Dolpo to Jomsom itinerary visits a remote region of Nepal located close to the Tibet border and then walk out over numerous high passes 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".

REASONS TO CHOOSE US

- 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 Upper Dolpo region.

- The Mountain Company has organised five successful Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT treks. For more information on how these treks went please take a look at our Trip Reports.
- We work with some of the best mountain leaders and guides with deep knowledge and experience of the Himalaya and Karakoram. Unlike many other operators we still allocate appropriately trained international leaders for more remote and technical trips like Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT .
- Read our [AITO Traveller Reviews 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.
- 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.
- 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 high quality three person domed tents with plenty of space for two people sharing plus gear.
- The Mountain Company will receive bespoke weather forecasts for the Dolpo region from EverestWeather.com and from our in house forecasting throughout the duration of this trek.
- 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 provide all porters with windproof jacket & trousers, crampons and shelter as per International Porter Protection Group ("IPPG") guidelines.
- There will be a range of tasty meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We give everyone in the group one chocolate or muesli bar per day (Mars, Twix, Bounty etc) and also provide Pringles and biscuits at tea time. For breakfast every morning we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.
- 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).
- Pre trip support will be given by our Operations team with first hand knowledge of Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT trek. During high season we have a TMC representative from our UK Operations team based in Kathmandu.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 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.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- 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".

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE IN KATHMANDU (1,400M)

Arrival in Kathmandu

None

Hotel Tibet in 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.

DAY 2: FLY TO NEPALGANJ (150M)

Fly to Nepalganj

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Soaltee Western Premium or Hotel Siddhartha

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.

DAY 3: FLY TO JUPHAL (2,500M), TREK TO DUNAI (2,000M)

Fly to Juphal

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

After an early morning start we take a charter flight to Juphal the main airport of the Dolpa district. After 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.

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)

Walking for 11km (7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 6: TREK TO AMCHI HOSPITAL (3,110M)

Walking for 12km (6 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 7: TREK TO RINGMO AND PHOKSUMDO LAKE (3,700M)

Walking for 6km (4 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 8: REST AND ACCLIMATISATION DAY AT PHOKSUMDO LAKE (3,700M)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 9: TREK TO PHOKSUMDO LAKE NORTH CAMP (3,630M)

Walking for 6km (4 to 5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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 Thinle 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.

DAY 10: TREK TO LAR TSA CAMP (4,312M)

Walking for 13km (7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 11: TREK TO SNOWFIELDS CAMP (4,676M)

Walking for 3km (3 to 4 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 12: REST & ACCLIMATISATION DAY AT SNOWFIELDS CAMP

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 13: CROSS KANG LA (5,380M), TREK TO SHEY GOMPA (4,257M)

Walking for 10km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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 gumpa 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 gumpa in a grassy area with several herders' huts nearby.

DAY 14: EXPLORATION DAY AT SHEY GOMPA (4,400M)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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

DAY 15: CROSS SALDANG LA (5,060M), TREK TO NAMGUNG (4,391M)

Walking for 11km (7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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 gumpa 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.

DAY 16: TREK TO TORA SUMDA (3,743M)

Walking for 15km (7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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 Thingle'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.

DAY 17: TREK TO MISCHAGAON VILLAGE (4,136M)

Walking for 11km (6 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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 gumpa 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.

DAY 18: TREK TO CHANPOLA GOTH NEAR SHIMEN VILLAGE (4,195M)

Walking for 6km (5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 19: TREK TO TINJE VILLAGE (4,132M)

Walking for 18km (8 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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 gomba 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.

DAY 20: TREK TO RAPKA (4,550M)

Walking for 14.5km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 21: CROSS CHHARKA LA (5,015M), TREK TO CHHARKA VILLAGE (4,284M)

Walking for 11km (8 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 22: EXPLORATION DAY AT CHHARKA VILLAGE (4,284)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 23: TREK TO NORBULUNG (4,750M)

Walking for 20.5km (6 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 24: CROSS HIGHER SANGDA LA (5,515M), TREK TO SANGDA PHEDI (5,100M)

Walking for 8km (7 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 25: CROSS LOWER SANGDA LA (5,035M), TREK TO SANGDA VILLAGE (3,732M)

Walking for 10km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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, slaty 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.

DAY 26: TREK TO PANGLING (2,900M)

Walking for 22km (7 to 8 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 27: TREK TO JOMSOM (2,670M)

Walking for 7km (3 to 4 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

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.

DAY 28: FLY TO POKHARA & KATHMANDU

Flight to Pokhara & Kathmandu

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

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.

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DAY 29: SIGHTSEEING IN KATHMANDU

Sightseeing in Kathmandu

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

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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 gompa 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.

DAY 30: FLY BACK HOME

Flight home

Breakfast

DATES & PRICES

2021

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
08 May 2021 to 06 Jun 2021	Jason Day	US\$5,995pp US\$5,895pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	Guaranteed Early Bird Discount
25 Sep 2021 to 24 Oct 2021	Robert Mads Anderson	US\$5,995pp US\$5,895pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	Guaranteed Early Bird Discount

2022

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
07 May 2022 to 05 Jun 2021	International Leader	US\$6,095pp US\$5,995pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	Guaranteed Early Bird Discount
24 Sep 2022 to 23 Oct 2022	International Leader	US\$6,095pp US\$5,995pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	2 Spaces Remaining Early Bird Discount

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

A Typical Day On Camping Trek

A TYPICAL DAY ON CAMPING TREK

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the assistant guides. Before heading over to the mess tent for breakfast you will 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 between 7am and 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 6-7pm. After supper the international 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.

Food provided on Camping Trek

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 chapatis, 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.

Communications

COMMUNICATIONS

We bring a Thuraya satellite phone for logistical, safety and personal use. Personal calls charged at £4 (US\$5 or €4.50) per minute and £2 (US\$3 €4.50) to send and receive SMS text.

Clothing and Equipment List

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

Each trekker should bring one backpack for gear 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 maximum weight allowance for back pack is 5kg.** The rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel or kit bag will be carried by a porter. **The maximum weight allowance for your duffel bag is 15kg.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

We suggest you print the kit list and tick items off as you pack them then weigh your kit bag before you come on trek.

Footwear

- Walking Boots. A pair of water repellent boots with ankle support. Boots must be in good condition, the best approach is to get new boots and break in before the trek. Over the years of organising treks in Nepal we have had several boots fall apart so it is essential you also bring trail shoes as a backup.
- Trail shoes. Can be used around camp and as a replacement if your walking boots fall apart!
- Sandals. fully enclosed sandals are best to protect your feet during river crossings. These are required for river crossings as well as two trekking poles.
- Walking socks.

Clothing

- Waterproof and Windproof jacket (with hood) and trousers (goretex or similar). For use if it rains or snows during the trek and in windy conditions.
- Trekking trousers. (eg. Mountain Hardwear Mesa V2 or The North Face Paramount Peak) Minimum two.
- Soft Shell Trousers.
- Long sleeve tops or shirts (not cotton). Minimum two.
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece or synthetic/ primaloft top.
- Sleeveless/ gilet or body warmer type fleece / synthetic top. This will help keep your core warm while not bulking when layering up. Gilet 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 or synthetic pants. To be worn around the lodge or added as an additional layer when the temperatures start to drop higher up.
- Medium weight down jacket.

Heads and Gloves

- Fleece gloves.
- Warm mittens and/or gloves.
- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf. (eg. [Buff Headwear](#) or purchase a [#myTMCbuff](#)).
- Headtorch. 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.

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, river crossings 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. These are not crampons - they can be fitted directly to your walking boots.
- 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 will be around -15°C. 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. We also provide everyone with a pillow.
- Daypack. Recommended size is 40 litres or larger as you need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, snacks and extra clothing as well as climbing gear and down jacket. The pack should have a good waist belt. It is also a good idea to bring a rain cover to keep the contents dry.
- 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). You may use a hydration pack lower down but the tube will freeze in the cold so ensure you still have 2 water bottles.

- 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](#).
- Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Aqua or Aqua 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. We suggest you keep this in your day pack for use after a toilet break during the trek or before eating any snacks. We provide sanitizer for use before meals.

Travelling

- Duffle bag for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). A rugged, waterproof duffle bag made of a plastic material 100-120 litres in size is recommended eg. [Mountain Equipment 100l](#) or [Rab 120l](#). 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, soap, travel towel, toothbrush, [travel wash](#) etc. You will be provided with toilet paper on trek.

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).

Threat and risk assessment

THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT FOR UPPER DOLPO

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 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.

Internal Flights

INTERNAL FLIGHTS FOR UPPER DOLPO

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](#).

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](#).

Weather and climate

WEATHER AND CLIMATE FOR UPPER DOLPO

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. 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.

Suggested reading

SUGGESTED READING AND MAPS FOR UPPER DOLPO

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.*

Books

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

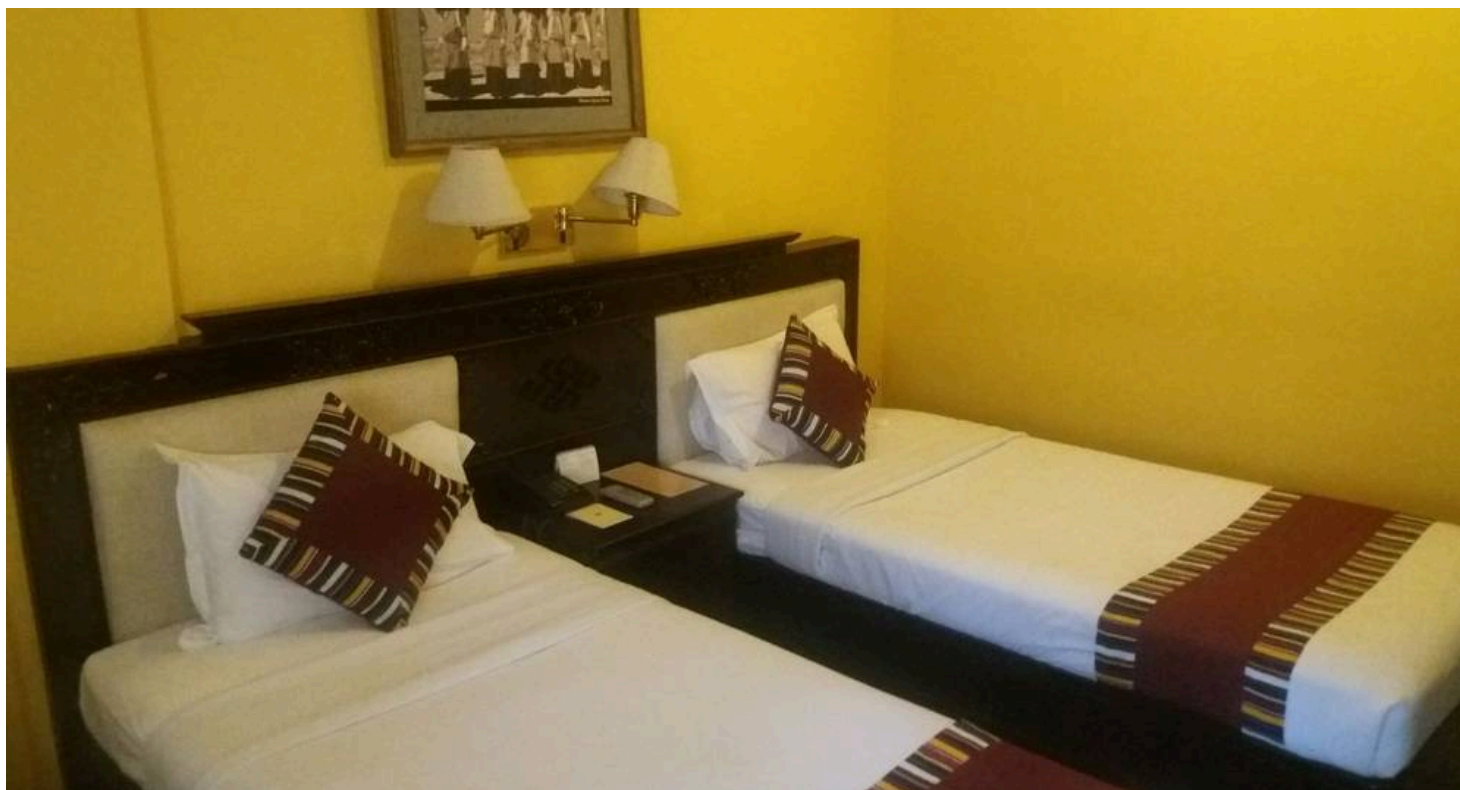
Himalayan Pilgrimage by David Snellgrove

Himalaya DVD by Eric Valli

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

ACCOMMODATION

HOTEL TIBET IN KATHMANDU



Hotel Tibet is located in Lazimpat next to the Radisson and is our usual hotel for our standard trips in Nepal.

We have used Hotel Tibet for over 15 years and our previous 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.

CAMPING IN NEPAL



We use both Mountain Hardwear Trango 3.1s and Quechua tents for our camping treks in Nepal.

Notes downloaded on: 09-07-2020

