

UPPER DOLPO TO JOMSOM GHT



COUNTRIES VISITED: **NEPAL**

TRIP TYPE: Trekking

TRIP GRADE: Strenuous

TRIP STYLE: Camping

5 Based On 7 Reviews

KG Carbon Footprint

TRIP LEADER: International Leader

GROUP SIZE: 5 - 14 people

NEXT DEPARTURE: 24 Sep 2022

50 Trees Planted for each Booking

Our Upper Dolpo to Jomsom trek visits a remote region of the Himalaya in mid West Nepal close to the Tibet border. Inner Dolpo to Upper Mustang trek crosses high passes on a section of The Great Himalaya Trail.

We walk through Shey Phoksundo National Park inhabited by the Dolpo-pa people. Upper Dolpo region, often known as Inner Dolpo or Dolpa, is one of the last enclaves of pure Tibetan culture. There are Bönpo (shamanistic pre Buddhist) monasteries including the important Shey Gompa. Pilgrims come to walk a religious circuit known as a kora around the nearby Crystal Mountain.

You can read our Blog to find out if [Upper Dolpo is the most remote trek in Nepal?](#) In this article we also explain how this isolated region is changing and why ours is the best itinerary in Dolpa. We have included this trek as one of the "Big 3" in our Blog article called [What Is The Best Trek In The Himalayas?](#)

David Snelgrove wrote about the Dolpa region in his book "Himalayan Pilgrimage". More recently Peter Matthiessen wrote "The Snow Leopard". Eric Valli filmed his superb movie "Himalaya" in Inner Dolpo and this was well worth watching.

By walking our Upper Dolpo trek itinerary you will see a very isolated region of the Himalaya. After landing at Juphal airstrip near Dunai we follow the Phoksundo Lake trek for four days. North of this beautiful lake

we cross the Kang La pass over to Shey. For the next ten days we are trekking in Dolpo to the isolated villages such as Shimen, Tinje and Chharka. On our trekking route we do not walk through the largest village in Dolpa called Dho Tarap. This place is in a wide valley to the East of Chharka village.

Our Upper Dolpo trek we cross many high passes out to Lower Mustang in Kali Gandaki valley. This incredible Himalayan journey finishes at the town of Jomsom on [Annapurna Circuit](#). Early next morning we take a flight via Pokhara to Kathmandu.

This is a camping style trekking expedition where you sleep in tents and our cooks provide the meals. If you prefer a lodge based trek then take a look at [Everest Base Camp](#) or [Luxury Everest Base Camp](#).

REASONS TO CHOOSE US

- We are Himalayan trekking specialists having operated trips in Nepal for many years. [Roland Hunter](#) has designed the itinerary from his first-hand experience of this trek.
- The Mountain Company has organised five treks to Upper Dolpo since 2010. For more information on how these treks went please take a look at our Trip Reports.
- Our [AITO Traveller Reviews for Upper Dolpo](#) have a holiday rating of 100%. Based on client feedback we won the 2018 Gold Award as AITO Tour Operator of the Year. Read more about our [Testimonials and Awards](#).
- We have included a gradual ascent profile in our itinerary for this trekking holiday. This will help you acclimatise to the high altitude.
- We use Western branded tents for our camping treks in Nepal. These are high quality three person tents with space for two people plus gear.
- We pay for private weather forecasts from EverestWeather.com. We also use in house forecasting throughout the duration of this trek.
- We send a Thuraya satellite phone on our group treks in Nepal. Your leader will have reliable communications for logistics, planning and group safety. We use GPS to upload your location daily on to Google Maps to track your progress during the trek.
- We provide the porters with windproof jackets & trousers, crampons and shelter. We follow International Porter Protection Group (“IPPG”) guidelines.
- We provide a range of tasty meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We give everyone in the group a chocolate or muesli bar per day. For breakfast we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.
- We bring a comprehensive medical aid kit. There will also be a portable altitude chamber (PAC or Gamow bag).
- Our team with first hand knowledge of this trek provides pre trip support. During high season we have someone from our UK Operations team based in Kathmandu.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Trekking arrangements. Including permits and fees, tents, International and Sherpa guides, porters and cooks. Restricted area permit for Upper Dolpo costing US\$810.
- All internal transport and transfers including airport collections.
- Internal flights. The flights are Kathmandu to Nepalganj & Juphal. After the trek from Jomsom to Pokhara & onto Kathmandu. The weight allowance is 15kg for your main bag checked into the hold and 5kg for your day pack.
- Twin share rooms at Hotel Tibet or Ambassador in Kathmandu. Hotel Siddhartha or Soaltee Western in Nepalganj.
- Breakfast only in Kathmandu and Nepalganj, all meals included while on trek.
- Twin share tents while on trek using our Western branded tents. These are three person domed tents with plenty of space for two people sharing plus gear.
- Porterage. The allowance for your main bag is 15kg.
- Weather forecasts for Dolpa region from EverestWeather.com.
- Thuraya satellite phone for organising logistics and medical evacuations. It can also be also used for personal calls at extra cost.
- GPS tracking on Google Maps. Your friends and family can track your progress during the trek.
- Trekking map given to you on arrival to Kathmandu.
- Rubberised luggage tag posted to you before departure.
- Full financial protection. Our Air Travel Organiser’s Licence (ATOL) number is 10921. Our Association of

Bonded Travel Operators Trust (ABTOT) membership number is 5365).

- Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company. We are available by email, phone or face to face meetings.

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. Each trekker should budget for giving tips into the group fund. This should be in region of 21,000 Nepalese rupees (£135, US\$175 or €150)
- If you have to wait in Nepalganj due to delays flying into Juphal accommodation is not included.
- If the airlines cancel the flights to Juphal it may be possible to take a flight by helicopter. This would cost extra depending on which helicopter company 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

Flying into Kathmandu on a clear day is in itself an unforgettable experience. The Himalayan peaks are only a short distance north of the capital of Nepal as seen from the plane. After customs, you will pass into the passenger pick-up area outside the building. You will see a Mountain Company signboard. Our representative will be waiting to welcome you to Nepal.

After transferring to your hotel we will give you a full trek briefing. The rest of the day will be yours to explore Kathmandu and to make final preparations for the trek. You will hear the Nepalese word for hello 'Namaste', you will never forget that word after this holiday.

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 of the Himalayan mountains from right side of the plane. 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 flight to Juphal the main airport of the Dolpa district. After landing at the short takeoff and landing "STOL" mountain airstrip we meet the trek crew. Once the porters have loaded up we start the Dolpa trek. We walk through terraced fields by the Thuli Bheri river and then up to the town of Dunai.

DAY 4: BUFFER DAY IN CASE OF ANY DELAYS FLYING TO JUPHAL

This is a buffer day in case there are delays in flying into Juphal. If this extra day is not used waiting for the flight then we keep in hand for use later in 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 suspension bridge at the confluence with the Suli Gad River. We follow this river for the next three days up to Phoksundo Lake. The entrance to Shey Phoksundo National Park is at Sulighat. This is Nepal's largest covering an area of 3,555 square kilometres.

For the rest of the day we hike along a trail passing through forests of pine, fir trees and giant red cedars. The hillside 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. We camp for the night at a grassy campsite at Chhepka. The local women wear Tibetan jewellery with turquoise, coral and amber necklaces.

The walk today should take about 3 ½ hours 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 we follow the trail on both sides of the valley with the crossings on good bridges. In some places we walk near the river and at other times on a narrow path high up in the gorge. We see forests of horse chestnut, larch and birch with bamboo stands further up the valley.

In the afternoon the valley widens out and we pass a river confluence. Pugma Khola flows from Jumla and we follow the Phoksumdo Khola. Heading north we reach a bridge that leads to Amchi Hospital. "Amchi" is the name for traditional Tibetan medicine.

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 PHOKSUNDO LAKE (3,700M)

Walking for 6km (4 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

After leaving Camp we pass a place called Palam and this is another winter settlement. We continue ascending for another hour to ridge at about 3,800 meters. From here we see the highest waterfall in Nepal flowing out from Phoksundo Lake. The trail descends through a birch forest and we reach Ringmo village. There are chortens and mani walls at the entrance of the village. It is a short walk to the camp on the shores of the beautiful Phoksundo Lake.

Today's walk should take about 4 ½ hours walking to Phoksundo Lake where you will have lunch.

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

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

We have two nights at Phoksundo Lake at an altitude of 3,700m for essential acclimatisation. During the day we explore Ringmo village and the Bönpo Buddhist monastery. Bönpos circumambulate chortens anticlockwise rather than clockwise as done by Buddhists.

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

Walking for 6km (4 to 5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

Beyond Ringmo we enter Upper Dolpo where it is necessary to have the restricted area permit. We follow the western side of Phoksundo Lake along a narrow cliff trail. This is the "Devil's trail" followed by Thinline in Eric Valli's film "Himalaya".

The path ascends to a ridge with views over the turquoise lake. From here you can see the peaks of Kanjiroba (6,612m), Norbung Kang (6,085) and Jhyarko Dingla (5,892m). We descend through stands of birch trees to our campsite on the northern shore of Phoksundo 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 a place called Chunemba.

We have lunch at the river confluence. Afterwards we follow a trail over a grassy ridge to avoid the narrow gorge. We join the Tuk Kyaksa Khola where it widens below Lar Tsa Camp.

This area produces a lot of *Cordyceps sinensis*. This is also known as caterpillar fungus (or “yarchagompa”). The fungus is a medicinal used by practitioners of Tibetan and Chinese medicine. In May and June people travel here to collect yarchagompa.

There is a spectacular view of Kanjiroba Himal (6,612m) from Lar Tsa camp. Stopping here, rather than continuing onto Snowfields Camp, is important for acclimatisation. This helps you adapt to the high altitude for crossing Kang La over to Shey.

Today it is likely we have a river crossing so it is a good idea to pack your sandals.

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

Walking for 3km (3 to 4 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

From Camp we walk further up the valley before crossing the river on a bridge. The vegetation here is juniper and azalea. We climb up a scree slope on a trail with switchbacks. From the crest of the slope we descend to Snowfields Camp next to the river. Peter Mathiesson named this Camp in his book “Snow Leopard”.

Snowfields Camp is at the base of Kang La that crosses into Upper or Inner Dolpo. In the afternoon it is a good idea to walk towards the pass for acclimatisation. 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

From Camp we cross the river then walk up grassy slopes to join the valley approaching Kang La. There are several places to cross the pass and the one to the right is often snowy. Most years we cross the pass further to the left. This trail is on loose scree so it is 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 view is spectacular of Kanjiroba to the West, the huge massif of Dhaulagiri East and into Tibet in the North.

The descent from the pass is on scree making for a rapid descent down to Hubajung Khola where we have lunch. The valley narrows to a gorge made of stratified orange rock. After an hour we pass a long mani wall and shortly after Shey gompa is visible down the valley.

Shey is at a river confluence under Crystal Mountain. This peak is so called because of the veins of quartz. It is the holiest mountain in Inner Dolpa and known as the younger brother to Mount Kailash in Tibet. Pilgrims make a kora (or circuit) of Crystal Mountain, and according to the lama this takes them 12 hours. Our camp is below the monastery in a grassy area with several herders' huts nearby.

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

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

After the tough day crossing Kang La we have a rest day for both the group and trek crew. We have time to explore Shey and its gompa, relax and also do some laundry if you like.

In the afternoon we recommend that you visit Tsakang gompa perched on a cliff an hours walk from Shey. You may see several herds of blue sheep along the trail.

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

Walking for 11km (7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

From Shey we head East following Sephu Khola. We pass many mani walls and isolated fields. There are also several seasonal settlements for yak herders known as doksas. After one hour we take a trail up a valley heading North East. This opens up into a bowl covered with loose scree in varying hues of yellow and orange.

On reaching the summit of Saldang La we enjoy panoramic views. You can see east into Mustang and west to Crystal Mountain and Kanjiroba. The landscape is like the arid Tibetan plateau with folded strata visible in the rocks.

We descend from the pass keeping to the left. The dusty trail has little vegetation apart from a few isolated pin cushion mosses. After a descent to a stream we contour further until you see the red and white gompa on cliffs above Namgung. There are stone houses in the village as well as the 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

After leaving Namgung the trail traverses high above the village. There are good views back to Saldang La crossed yesterday. After a few hours of contouring we reached a crest. From here we 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. They grow what they can from this 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. This is supplemented by manufactured Chinese goods and yarchagompa collected in the Dolpa area.

We have lunch in Saldang village. Afterwards we take the high level trail to Karang village. In June time the villagers will be busy ploughing and planting their fields. We descend to the valley and walk along the river bank to our camp at Tora Sumda. This is 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 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.

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

Walking for 6km (5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

Shortly after leaving Camp we walk through Mischagaon. After looking around the village we leave by ascend the slopes behind on a good trail up to Muri La. From top of the pass there are superb views over

to Dhaulagiri. You can also see the peaks Tshu Kalpo Kang Serku Dholam and Tripura Thumba.

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 in altitude we will stop for a lunch on a grassy area near a river. After we follow a gorge passing a small waterfall to Chanpola Goth. The camp is in a grassy area next to a yak herders' settlement near a river. North from here is a trail to Tibet where there is trading between Dolpo-pa and Tibetans.

It should take about 3 hours to complete the long ascent to the pass and 2 hours to descent to Chanpola Goth

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

Walking for 18km (8 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

After leaving camp it takes about an hour to walk down the valley to Shimen in the Panzang valley. This valley is one of the four main valleys in Upper Dolpo. The others being Tarap, Nangkhong and Tsharka. This village has groves of willow and a mani wall over 600m in length. Nearby there are fields of buckwheat, barley and potatoes.

After an hour we walk up alongside the river under overhanging conglomerate rocks. We then climb up to reach Mendo Camp on a grassy shelf. Shortly after you see Pu gumpa on the other side of the river. You follow Panzang Khola for a further 1 ½ hour to our lunch spot next to Namygal chorten.

After lunch the valley widens out. After several hours we pass through the hamlet of Phalwa. Tibetans live in this place where the men have red sashes in their hair. Soon after we arrived in Tinje. This is one of the larger villages in Upper Dolpo located in a wide valley. There are extensive fields with two gompas and an old fort.

The 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 art is well known.

To get to our camp for the night we walk past the disused airstrip then descend to a grassy area by the river.

Today 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

We follow Panzang Khola past ruins of an old settlement on the other side of the river. After two hours we arrive at the river confluence where we take the left tributary Kehen Khola. We walk for a further hour to reach our lunch spot in a grassy area next to the river.

After lunch we continue walking up the left bank of Kehen Khola. We pass through several doksas before arriving at 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 after an early breakfast for the longest day of the trip. We hike up the valley and after ½ hour cross Kehen Khola. Usually in May we can use rocks in the river to keep our boots dry. If you are here in the Autumn season you should bring sandals as the water level is likely to be higher at that time of year.

At the river confluence near a yak herder's camp we take the left river Myantoku Khola. This valley opens out to a wide floodplain. There are several rivers that we have to cross over.

We start the climb to the pass by reaching a cairn at 4,950m. The valley widens again with many yaks grazing on the extensive pastures. From here you should be able to see another cairn and trail up to Chharka La. It takes another hour to reach the summit of the pass where we are rewarded with a spectacular view. After a short descent the Dhaulagiri massif appears on the right.

On the descent from the pass the trail contours high above Chharka Tulsi Khola. Several times we descend then climb out of side valleys. After passing the entrance chortens and the school you enter the old village. This place has narrow alleys and courtyards of the houses with their animals.

The ascent to the pass took 5 hours walking and from there it is a further 3 hours walk to get to Chharka village

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

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

Today we have a rest day for the group and trek crew. You can explore Chharka and take some time to relax before the final section of the trek out to Jomsom. In the village we can visit the two gompas, both Buddhist and Bönpo, representing the two religions of Dolpo.

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

Walking for 20.5km (6 1/2 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Camping

Shortly after leaving Chharka village we cross Chharka Tulsi Khola on a bridge. At the river confluence we cross another bridge to follow the left bank of Thasan Khola. The trail contours high above the river following some 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. Soon after you reach the doksa at Norbulung.

Today's hike 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. We continue to a crest with a cairn at 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 walking up the trail to the Sangda La pass. This marks the boundary between Dolpa and Annapurna regions.

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. The descent to Sangda Phedi takes about 1 ½ hours.

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 up to the lower Sangda La at 5,035m. The mountain vista is superb as we look towards Kali Gandaki valley and Thorong La. There are 6,000m peaks including Tongu Himal and Mukot Himal.

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

After lunch there is a 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 gully to cross the first tributary river at 3,800m. We traverse for ½ hour to the second river again crossing on rocks. Soon after you will see the entrance chorten to Sangda village. There is a large wall around the fields and the village is compact to maximise the amount of fields.

On the other side of the valley and you will see the deserted remains of two abandoned villages. They are no longer used as their water supply dried up and this shows the precarious nature of living here. 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. Up this valley there is the peak of Tasartse 6,343m towering above.

After 1 ½ hours you reach a third ridge at 4,250m. It is worth looking back up where you can now see both higher and lower Sangda La passes. 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 called Jeula Danda you get a spectacular vista. You can see Thorong Peak, Nilgiri and Annapurna. If you walk to a cairn above this pass to get views into Upper Mustang as well as down to Muktinath and Kagbeni.

We have a long traverse and descend to a river gorge then continue to the eleventh ridge. 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

For our last day walking on this trek we follow the trail down through the main valley. We cross Kali Gandaki river and walk along the road to Jomsom. After checking into one of the lodges you can explore the town. 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

We take an early morning flight from Jomsom to Pokhara then onto Kathmandu.

DAY 29: SPARE DAY IN KATHMANDU

Sightseeing in Kathmandu

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

This is a buffer day in case of delays flying back from Jomsom.

DAY 30: FLY BACK HOME

Flight home

Breakfast

Transfer to Kathmandu airport for the flight back home. End of trip.

DATES & PRICES

2022

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
24 Sep 2022 to 23 Oct 2022	Robert Mads Anderson	US\$6,295pp US\$6,195pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	5 Left to Guarantee Early Bird Discount

2023

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
06 May 2023 to 04 Jun 2023	International Leader	US\$6,425pp US\$6,350pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	5 Left to Guarantee Early Bird Discount
23 Sep 2023 to 22 Oct 2023	International Leader	US\$6,425pp US\$6,350pp	US\$300pp / NA	5 Left to Guarantee Early Bird Discount

2024

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
04 May 2024 to 02 Jun 2024	International Leader	US\$6,425pp US\$6,350pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	5 Left to Guarantee Early Bird Discount
28 Sep 2024 to 27 Oct 2024	International Leader	US\$6,425pp US\$6,350pp	US\$300pp / US\$400pp	5 Left to Guarantee Early Bird

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
				Discount

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

A Typical Day On Trek

TYPICAL DAY ON CAMPING TREK IN NEPAL

We provide a comfortable experience on our camping style treks. Our team works hard to support you so that you can relax and enjoy [trekking in Nepal](#). We provide personal tents, mess tent, kitchen tent and toilet tent(s). The camp will be set up and dismantled by the trek crew. We bring along a cook and kitchen helpers to provide the meals.

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the trek crew. Before heading for breakfast you pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the trek crew pack away the tents. The porters arrange their loads and set off on the trail in the cool of the morning. After breakfast, between 7am and 8am, we start walking.

The pace of the trek is moderate as there is plenty of time in the itinerary to reach the camp for tonight. There will be plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. Lunch will be around midday at a spot by the side of the trail. Our cooks prepare lunch for us and the food is usually ready by the time the group arrives.

After lunch we continue the walk and on most days we arrive to camp by mid afternoon. Some of the trek crew would have gone ahead of the group to set up camp and to put up the tents. On arrival to camp you will get a hot drink and biscuits. In the evening our cook will provide a three course meal in the mess tent around 6pm.

After supper the leaders will discuss the plan for the next day. Afterwards people might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day's events or playing cards. After a tiring day most people head to their tent quite early for the night. Tomorrow is likely to be very similar as today! The only difference is that if we are crossing a high pass or climbing to a summit we leave camp earlier in the morning.

You can read more about our [Camping Treks in Nepal](#) on our Blog. This article explains the advantages of camping versus teahouse lodge treks. It also describes what the campsite set up is like and more about the food provided by our cooks.

Food provided on Camping Trek

FOOD PROVIDED ON CAMPING TREK IN NEPAL

While on a camping style trek in Nepal we provide tasty and nutritional food. We make sure there is more than enough quantity to go around as trekkers will be hungry after a long day on the trail. Over the years we have worked on increasing the variety of the menus. We have expanded the list of ingredients provided to the cooks so they have more to work with. Also in 2015 we purchased two food dehydrators with a vacuum sealing machine. We dehydrate a large number of different vegetables in Kathmandu before departure. This has transformed the quality of food especially on longer treks to remote areas.

For breakfast we provide porridge or cereal, toast or chapatis and eggs. There will be hot drinks including tea, herbal teas, hot chocolate and coffee. We provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.

For lunch we stop at a convenient spot with water at the side of the trail. The cook and kitchen walk ahead of the group in the morning and lunch should be ready shortly after our arrival. After lunch we have time to relax before starting to walk again in the afternoon.

On arrival at camp in the afternoon you have biscuits and a hot drink such as tea or coffee. Around 6pm we serve a three course meal in the mess tent. The starter is often soup with popcorn or poppadoms. We

have a range of main dishes and carbohydrates including rice, potatoes or pasta.

We cater for a variety of dietary requirements. Our meals are suitable for vegetarians. If there is a meat dish then we also provide vegetarian options as standard. During booking we find out if you have any dietary needs and agree upon meal plans before departure. If you have any questions about the food provided please get in touch with us to discuss further.

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.

Kit List

KIT LIST FOR UPPER DOLPO TREK

This is the mandatory kit list for the safety of everyone in the group and to ensure a successful trek. You must have the following items tailored for Upper Dolpo trek. The group leader will check your gear in Kathmandu before 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. At the start of the trek you will experience hot conditions with temperatures up to 25 Celsius. You experience the coldest temperatures in Sangda Phedi at an altitude of 5,100m. Overnight lows here will be down to around -12°C

You should bring a rucksack or backpack for gear required during the day. Your pack should contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and snacks. **The weight limit is 5kg.** A porter will carry the rest of your personal equipment packed in a duffel or kit bag. **The weight limit for your duffel bag is 15kg.** Please mark your bag on the outside for easy identification.

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 we have had several boots fall apart so you should also bring trail shoes as a backup.
- Trail shoes. Used around camp and as a replacement if your walking boots fall apart!
- Sandals. Enclosed sandals are best to protect your feet during river crossings. 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).
- Soft Shell Trousers.
- Long sleeve tops or shirts (not cotton).
- 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 used in combination with base layers, other fleeces and down jacket. This provides the most warmth and insulation.
- Thermals or base layer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Fleece or synthetic leggings. Worn around the camp or added as a layer when the temperatures start to drop higher up.
- Medium weight down jacket.

Heads and Gloves

- Fleece gloves.
- Warms mittens and/or gloves.
- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf (eg. Buff Headwear).
- Head torch. Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses. The lenses need to be Category 4 rated. They should have side protection or wraparound design.

For crossing the passes

- Trekking poles (Black Diamond with “Flick Lock” are best). Two poles are mandatory for your safety. These will be helpful on steep sections of the trail and river crossings. Also for walking on snow or ice higher up.
- [Kahtoola Microspikes](#) or [YakTrax Summits](#). These are for your security when descending passes with snowy or icy conditions. They fit onto your walking boots.
- Gaiters. A pair of knee high gaiters used to keep boots dry if walking through snow or on wet ground.

Personal equipment

- Sleeping bag. Overnight lows down to -12 Celsius. It is possible to rent a bag from Shonas Rental in Kathmandu.
- Fleece or silk liner for your sleeping bag. A liner protects your sleeping bag from getting dirty. Also helps by adding extra insulation to keep you warm at night.
- Sleeping mat (eg. Thermarest). On trek we provide everyone with a foam mat. We recommend two layers for insulation and comfort. We also provide everyone with a pillow.
- Day pack. Recommended size is around 40 litres. You need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, snacks and extra clothing and climbing gear. 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- dry bags 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 two water bottles.
- Pee bottle. Recommended as means you do not have to get up to find the toilet tent at night! For men you can use an old water bottle. For women take a look at SheWee.
- Sunscreen and lip salve with a high SPF.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Aqua or Aqua Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Books and cards etc.
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer. 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.
- Covid lateral flow test kit (i.e. at least one pack of seven tests). Please test yourself after arrival to Nepal and if at any time you have symptoms of Covid during the trip.
- Face masks. A mask helps protect those around you from Covid infection, and it also helps protect you. An N95 respirator is the most protective face covering that you can get against omicron and other viruses. An N95 is a disposable face covering that filters out at least 95% of airborne particles. An alternative to the N95 mask is the KN95 mask, which is the Chinese equivalent of the US standard.

Travelling

- Duffel bag for your personal gear on the trek (carried by a porter). Rugged and waterproof made of a plastic material. Size 100-120 litres. 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 with soap, travel towel, toothbrush etc. We provide toilet paper while on trek.

Personal first aid kit

We provide a [comprehensive group first aid kit](#). Please bring personal medications and other items you might use 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

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR UPPER DOLPO TREK

You should be aware trekking in a developing country involves a risk of personal injury or death. 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 and unpredictable weather. There could be last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. The ability to work in a team is an important aspect of our trips.

We have performed a threat and risk assessment for our Upper Dolpo to Jomsom GHT trek. Our trips have a degree of risk. This is part of the attraction of adventure travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. By identifying the hazards on this trek we assess the level of risk. We have control measures in place to reduce this happening or to reduce the impact.

Our risk assessment is available to clients on request. 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 e.g. crossing passes in a whiteout.
- Severe bad weather and conditions when camping.
- Climatic injuries (dehydration, sunburn, 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 e.g. crossing Kang la pass.
- Lightning strike.
- Wildlife, pack animals (e.g. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals can knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite. Discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.
- Earthquake.
- Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
- Endemic local diseases. 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 accidents. Read paragraph "Internal flight".
- Contaminated food and/ or water.

This trip visits a remote area. You are away from the usual emergency services and medical facilities. Evacuation for a serious injury requiring hospitalisation could take up to several days. This delay could impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the usual means of evacuation. They are not always available or hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

Internal Flights

INTERNAL FLIGHTS IN NEPAL

Flights from Nepal's Short Take-Off & Landing ("STOL") airstrips are dependent on weather. Delays often happen if there is poor visibility or high winds. For our itineraries with flights to or from STOL we include one extra day in Kathmandu at the end of the trip. This is in case of delays flying back. If the delays are

longer we will help reschedule your international flights. There is likely to be a fee charged by the airline for this. You also have to pay for costs incurred in Kathmandu as a result of the delay such as accommodation and meals.

You should read the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (“FCDO”) travel advice to Nepal. For their latest advice take a look at their [Safety & Security section under Air Travel](#). There have been some recent air accidents in Nepal. The European Union has banned Nepalese airlines from flying to Europe. For more information on Nepal’s air safety profile take a look at [Aviation Safety Network](#).

Weather and conditions

WEATHER AND CONDITIONS FOR UPPER DOLPO TREK

Our view is that the best time to do this trek is during May. This gives you the best chance of crossing the high passes out to Jomsom. It is also possible to do this trek in September into October. In most years the conditions on the passes are fine in Autumn season. In some years there is early winter snows in October due to a cyclonic depression. If there is early snow this makes travel impossible for the pack animals.

This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the season, altitude and the time of day. During the first couple of days it can be quite hot with temperatures up to 25 Celsius. The coldest temperatures will be in Sangda Phedi at an altitude of 5,100m. Overnight lows here can get down to around -12 Celsius.

We have written a blog article [When is the best time to go trekking in Nepal Himalaya?](#) This has information about the weather and conditions in Spring and Autumn seasons. It also explains the differences between the trekking regions of Nepal.

Suggested reading

BOOKS AND MAPS FOR UPPER DOLPO TREK

Maps

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

Books

High Frontiers: Himalayan Pastoralists in a Changing World by Kenneth Bauer. 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 Dru

ACCOMMODATION

HOTEL TIBET IN KATHMANDU



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

We have used Hotel Tibet for over 15 years and our clients have enjoyed staying at this property. It has a good location, comfortable rooms and high level of service. There is a garden terrace next to the restaurant on the ground floor. On the fifth floor there is a 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.

TRIP REPORTS

To read our Trip Reports for Upper Dolpo please click on the link below to our blog:

[Upper Dolpo to Jomsom in May 2022 led by Jason Day](#)

[Upper Dolpo to Jomsom in May 2018 led by Almas Khan](#)

[Upper Dolpo to Jomsom in May 2017 led by Jo Clark](#)

[Upper Dolpo to Jomsom in May 2016 led by Ade Summers](#)

[Upper Dolpo to Jomsom in May 2014 led by Ade Summers](#)

[Upper Dolpo to Jomsom in May 2010 led by Roland Hunter](#)

TRIP REVIEWS

REVIEW BY CB ON 08/06/2017

Dolpo, Nepal: May 2017. Fabulous trek through a remote region of north-west Nepal. The Mountain Company organised everything brilliantly! ...

REVIEW BY POD51 ON 09/06/2017

Upper Dolpo, Nepal. This was an amazing trek in the remote region of Upper Dolpo, trekking through an area strongly influenced by Tibetan culture. The scenery is spectacular trekking through beautiful gorges -

never far from a pounding river, staying alongside wonderful villages e.g. Ringmo, Shey, and Tinje, and spending time alongside the turquoise blue lake of Phoksundo. There is challenge too ... regularly crossing spectacular passes with mountain vistas. The schedule is well planned with additional days to acclimatise, plenty of good food to provide us with the energy to complete the trek and enjoy the area. I have regularly trekked with The Mountain Company, the itineraries are very well planned, the treks are extremely well led both with Western Leadership and local Sirdar and Guides. In this trek in particular there was an excellent relationship and engagement between all the crew and trekkers. It's great to see that as much care is taken regarding the health and well-being of the crew on the trek as the clients. The trek leaders have access to high-quality weather forecasts and satellite communication. Very well managed trek. ...

REVIEW BY PAUL C ON 25/06/2017

Scenery, Culture, Wildlife, and History. Upper Dolpo has it all. Recently completed a 4-week trek with The Mountain Company in the Upper Dolpo region of Nepal, it was challenging but immensely rewarding to see such a rich tapestry of culture, landscapes and wildlife. I highly recommend this trek. The route takes six x five thousand metre passes and you get the chance to stay at Phoksundo Lake and Shey Gumpa. The area is full of Tibetan influence. The stunning views of Upper Dolpo will stay with me for a long time. We saw Tibetan Wolf, Jackal, lots of Blue Sheep and Marmots, and more than 40 species of birds including regular Lammergeier and Griffon Vulture. The Mountain Company is a small British-based tour operator who specialise in Himalaya treks and importantly for me, they genuinely care about their Sherpa guides, kitchen, and porter staff. They plan their treks in great detail and plan rest days at strategic points to ensure that everyone has the best chance of completing the trek. The quality and experience of their group leaders and Sirdars are second to none. This was my 5th trek with The Mountain Company which speaks for itself! ...

Notes downloaded on: 17-08-2022

