

Upper Mustang



COUNTRIES VISITED: NEPAL

TRIP TYPE: Trekking
TRIP GRADE: Demanding
TRIP STYLE: Tea House

TRIP LEADER: Local Leader
GROUP SIZE: 2 - 10 people
NEXT DEPARTURE: 11 Apr 2021

A trek to the remote semi-independent Kingdom of Upper Mustang located north of Annapurna on the Tibet border

Our Upper Mustang itinerary has been carefully designed to explore the quieter areas of Upper Mustang and in most places to stay away from the new road. We approach Lo Manthang on the west side of the Kali Gandaki and descend on the less visited east side of this valley.

Upper Mustang is located north of Annapurna and at an average altitude of 4,000m is geologically and culturally part of the Tibetan plateau. The valleys are arid and dry with colourful rock formations containing many cave dwellings high up in the cliffs. The first trekking parties were allowed into Upper Mustang in 1992 and there are still very few people (about 700 trekkers each year) visiting Upper Mustang as a result it is one of the few places left where one can see undisturbed Tibetan culture.

Mustang is a remote semi-independent Tibetan Kingdom with a walled capital called Lo Manthang. Upper Mustang was once part of Tibet and was used by the salt caravans crossing the Himalaya into Nepal. It became an independent kingdom in 1380 and the current royal family can trace their lineage back to this time. In 1960's Mustang was a strong hold for Tibetan Khampa guerrillas fighting the occupying Chinese forces. CIA supported these fighters and secretly trained some of them in the US.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Internal flight to/from Jomsom and Kathmandu.
- All transfers including airport collections.
- One day sightseeing in Kathmandu with Nepalese cultural guide and private vehicle.
- Twin share room at Hotel Tibet or Hotel Ambassador in Kathmandu.
- Breakfast only in Kathmandu, all meals included while on trek.
- Lodge based accommodation on trek however we also bring along tents in case you prefer to sleep outside of the lodge. The tents will be allocated on a twin share basis using our three person Western branded tents.
- All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, trekking guide(s) and porter(s). We provide one trekking guide for group size of two people and two guides for a group size of three people and three guides for group size of six people plus.
- 11 day Upper Mustang permit costing US\$550 per person.
- Bespoke weather forecasts for Upper Mustang region from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this trek.
- Thuraya satellite phone to ensure our guides have reliable communications with us for logistics, planning and group safety.
- Upper Mustang 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 with us 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 at US\$40 (approx £25).
- Lunch and evening meals in Kathmandu.
- Personal clothing & equipment, please see the Appendix for suggested kit list.
- Tips (guidance on amounts included in our "Nepal Pre Trip Information" notes).
- Other items not listed in "What is included".

ITINERARY

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

Arrive in Kathmandu

No meals

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.

DAY 2: SIGHTSEEING IN KATHMANDU

Sightseeing in Kathmandu

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

This is a one day guided sightseeing tour of the Kathmandu Valley visiting three out of the seven World Heritage Sites. You will start off by visiting Patan Durbar Square then drive to the Buddhist stupa at Boudhanath followed by the last stop of the day at the Hindu shrine of Pashupatinath. The tour is likely to finish around 4pm and the rest of the day is free to further explore Kathmandu as well as to pack your bags for the trek starting tomorrow morning. You can leave a bag at the hotel with items not needed on trek.

Three major towns are located in the valley, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, each having a great artistic and architectural tradition. Kathmandu is the capital and the largest city in the country. Patan, the second largest is separated from Kathmandu by a river. Bhaktapur, the third largest, is towards the eastern end of the valley and its relative isolation is reflected in its slower pace and more distinctly mediaeval atmosphere.

In the Valley the landscape is dramatically sculpted by the contours of the paddy fields. The towns and villages are alive with the colours of farm produce, ranging from pyramids of golden grain to the vivid reds of chilli peppers laid out on mats to dry in the sun. In the streets and towns there is a constant bustle of activity, especially in the bazaars and markets where the farmers sell their vegetables and fruit.

DAY 3: FLY TO POKHARA (827M)

Fly to Kathmandu

Breakfast

Mount Kailash Resort in Pokhara

After taking the short flight to Pokhara you have the rest of the day to explore and relax in the city. For the flight we suggest you sit on the right side of the aircraft for views of the Himalayas as we fly westwards.

DAY 4: MORNING FLIGHT TO JOMSOM (2,713M), TREK TO KAGBENI (2,810M)

Flight to Jomsom

Walking 10km (4 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

After an early breakfast and transfer to the airport we take the short but spectacular mountain flight into Jomsom. On arrival at Jomsom, we meet our support crew and load our pack animals ready for our trek to Kagbeni.

Our trail follows the right bank of the Kali Kandaki river and crosses several side tributaries mostly crossed by simple bridges. We pass through the small settlement of Eklo Bhatti (2,740m) where we often stop for lunch before continuing on to Kagbeni and our campsite. Kagbeni has a small Gompa which can be visited and from the roof there are good views northwards into the Kingdom of Mustang.

DAY 5: TREK TO CHELE (3,050M)

Walking 12.5km (6 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

A short climb takes us out of Kagbeni, crossing two side tributaries, the Simkoghiu Khola and Dhingklo Khola, before arriving in Tangbe (3,060m) for lunch before continuing on to Chussang. From this village we cross Narsing Khola by a bridge before passing through Chhomnang and continuing northwards. The Kali Gandaki river is crossed by a modern steel bridge before the trail climbs up to Chele

Today as you walk you will see arid valleys with colourful rock formations containing many cave dwellings high up in the cliffs. The villages in Mustang are picturesque with a labyrinth of alleys and white washed houses.

DAY 6: TREK TO TAMAGAON (3,710M)

Walking 14km (7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

From Chele the trail steepens as we climb steep steps and paths carved out of the rock face for over 600m up to Samar (3,660m) for lunch. On the trail up to Samar, we cross two passes Taklam La at 3,624m and Dajori La at 3,736m.

As you walk out of Samar we ascend to cross Bhana La at 3,838m followed by Yamday La (3,860m) to reach Syangboche. From this village we ascend to Syangboche La at 3,800m before descending and taking the left trail to the junction to arrive at our campsite at Tamagoan.

DAY 7: TREK TO DHAKMAR (3,820M)

Walking 10.5km (7 hours walking)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

From Tamagoan we pass through Chhunga and Jaite before ascending to Nyi La at 4,010m. From the pass there are good views of the Annapurna range to the south and Mustang to the north. On descent we take the trail to Ghami, this is a picturesque village with mani walls, many chortens and a monastery.

From Ghami we take the high trail above the road and then continue for a further two hours to Dhakmar. Towering above the village are towering red cliffs and there is a small monastery well worth visiting.

DAY 8: TREK VIA GHAR GUMBA TO LO MANTHANG (3,810M)

Walking 15km (7 to 8 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

Today is a longer day however we follow the high trail crossing Mui La at 4,170m and passing through Ghar Ghumba located away from the road to Lo Manthang. As we cross Mui La we see the villages of Marang and Tsarang far below and also on the east side of the Kali Gandaki valley the Teri La pass is visible heading to Naar and Phu villages. At Ghar Ghumba we will see many many prayer flags and chorten at one of the oldest monasteries in Upper Mustang. From Ghar Ghumba it takes a further 2 ½ hours to cross Chogo La pass at 4,230m and from there we make the descent to the fabled village of Lo Mathang.

DAY 9: DAY TO EXPLORE LO MANTHANG (3,810M)

Exploring around Lo Manthang

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

Today we have time to explore Lo Manthang and to visit outlying sites of interest such as Namgyal monastery about one hours walk to the north. Some of our previous group were granted an audience with the King of Mustang at his palace in Lo Manthang.

For our May departure you will visit Tiji festival held in Lo Manthang. This is a three day festival and celebrates a myth of a deity, Dorje Jono, who must battle against his demon father to save the Kingdom of Mustang from destruction. There are prayers and ritual dances performed by monks wearing masks and horse races outside the village.

DAY 10: TREK TO YARA (3,650M)

Walking 11.5km (6 hours walking)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

From Lo Manthang we descend on the less visited east side of the Kali Gandaki valley for the next five days to Tetang village. After leaving Lo Manthang we cross Lo la at 3,950m and then start the walk up to Dhi. From this village we descend to Kali Gandaki and cross the river to east bank then follow Puyung Khola to Yara village.

DAY 11: DAY WALK TO TASHI KUMBUM CAVE COMPLEX AND TO LURI GOMPA

Exploring Tashi Kumbum cave

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

Today we got for a day walk up to Tashi Kumbum cave complex and to Luri gumpa and return to Yara in the afternoon. Tashi Kumbum is an hour walk from Yara and is a group of six man-made caves with Buddhist paintings and a large chorten. A further hour up the Puyung Khola is the 13th Century Luri Gumpa and its complex of Buddhist caves.

DAY 12: TREK TO TANGGE (3,240M)

Walking 12km (5 to 6 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

From Yara we descend to the Dhechyang Khola and cross the riverbed strewn with ammonite fossils. From the river we ascend to Sertange Danda ridge and cross a pass at 3,825m then descend to Tangge where we camp for the night.

DAY 13: TREK TO PAHA (4,100M)

Walking 10km (4 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

After a short climb out of the village we descend to the Tangge Khola. After crossing the river we ascend to Le Lo la at 4,200m where there are mountains views of Dhaulagiri and Nilgiri far south down the Kali Gandaki. After the pass we camp at a wild and remote campsite near several springs we use as a water source.

DAY 14: TREK TO TETANG (3,040M)

Walking 10km (5 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

Today we walk along a wonderful trail along a ridge with superb views. We descend to the village of Tetang where we camp for the night.

DAY 15: TREK VIA GYU LA TO MUKTINATH (3,760M)

Walking 11.5km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

From Tetang village we do not descend to Chhuksang and follow the road to Kagbeni instead we follow the steep valley heading south-east to cross Gyu la at 4,077m over to Muktinath. Muktinath is on the popular Annapurna Circuit and has one of the holiest Hindu shrines and many Indian pilgrims come to visit.

DAY 16: TREK VIA LUPRA TO JOMSOM (2,743M)

Walking 15.5km (6 to 7 hours)

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight teahouse lodge

Today we walk down to Jomsom passing through Lupra village where we can visit the Bon-Po monastery.

In Jomsom we stay at one of the lodges located near the airport. After hot showers you can explore Jomsom, check emails 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 17: FLY TO POKHARA AND ON TO KATHMANDU

Fly to Pokhara & Kathmandu

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

We take an early morning flight to Pokhara then connect onto another flight to Kathmandu.

DAY 18: SPARE DAY IN KATHMANDU

Breakfast

Hotel Tibet in Kathmandu

This is a free day for sightseeing and shopping.

DAY 19: FLY BACK HOME

Fly home

Breakfast

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

DATES & PRICES

2021

Dates	Trip Leader	Price	Single Supplement: Room/Tent	Availability
11 Apr 2021 to 29 Apr 2021	Local Leader	US\$3,395pp	US\$240pp / NA	2 Left to Guarantee
09 May 2021 to 27 May 2021	Local Leader	US\$3,395pp	US\$240pp / NA	2 Left to Guarantee
03 Oct 2021 to 21 Oct 2021	Local Leader	US\$3,395pp	US\$240pp / NA	2 Left to Guarantee

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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 MUSTANG

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 Mustang 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 trek you are likely to experience quite warm conditions and you will experience the coldest temperatures at Pha Camp at an altitude of 4,100m where overnight lows can get down to around -10°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.
- Wool and liner socks.
- Sandals: fully enclosed sandals are best to protect your feet as you will be walking in these for most of the time three days with multiple river crossings. These are required for river crossings as well as two trekking poles (see below).
- Trainers/sneakers. Can be used in lodge in the afternoons/ evenings.

Clothing:

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (goretex or similar).
- Trekking trousers.

- Long sleeve shirts (not cotton).
- Micro fleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece.
- Sleeveless or body warmer type fleece.
- Thermals or baselayer for top & bottom (merino wool or synthetic).
- Fleece pants.
- Medium weight down jacket (eg Nuptse jacket by The North Face).

Handwear:

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

Headwear:

- Wool or fleece hat.
- Sun hat.
- Bandana or scarf.
- Bring extra batteries.
- Sunglasses.

Personal Equipment:

- Sleeping bag. Maximum overnight lows at Pha Camp will be around -10 Celsius. *Note: it is possible to rent a bag in Kathmandu from Shonas Rental.*
- Backpack large enough to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing.
- Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised.
- Two water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best).
- Sunscreen and lipsalve with a high SPF.
- Insect repellent.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- Favourite snack food.
- Books, ipod and cards etc.
- Trekking poles (Black Diamond with "Flick Lock" are best).
- Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- Insurance certificate.
- Earplugs (optional).
- Baby wipes (optional).
- Hand sanitizer (optional).

Travelling:

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

Personal first aid kit:

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

- Any personal medications.
- Malaria prophylactic tablets.
- 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 MUSTANG

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 Mustang 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 Mustang we can assess the level of risk and implement control measures to reduce this happening.

Our full threat and risk assessment for Upper Mustang 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.
- 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.
- 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 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

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 recent air accidents in Nepal and in December 2013 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 MUSTANG

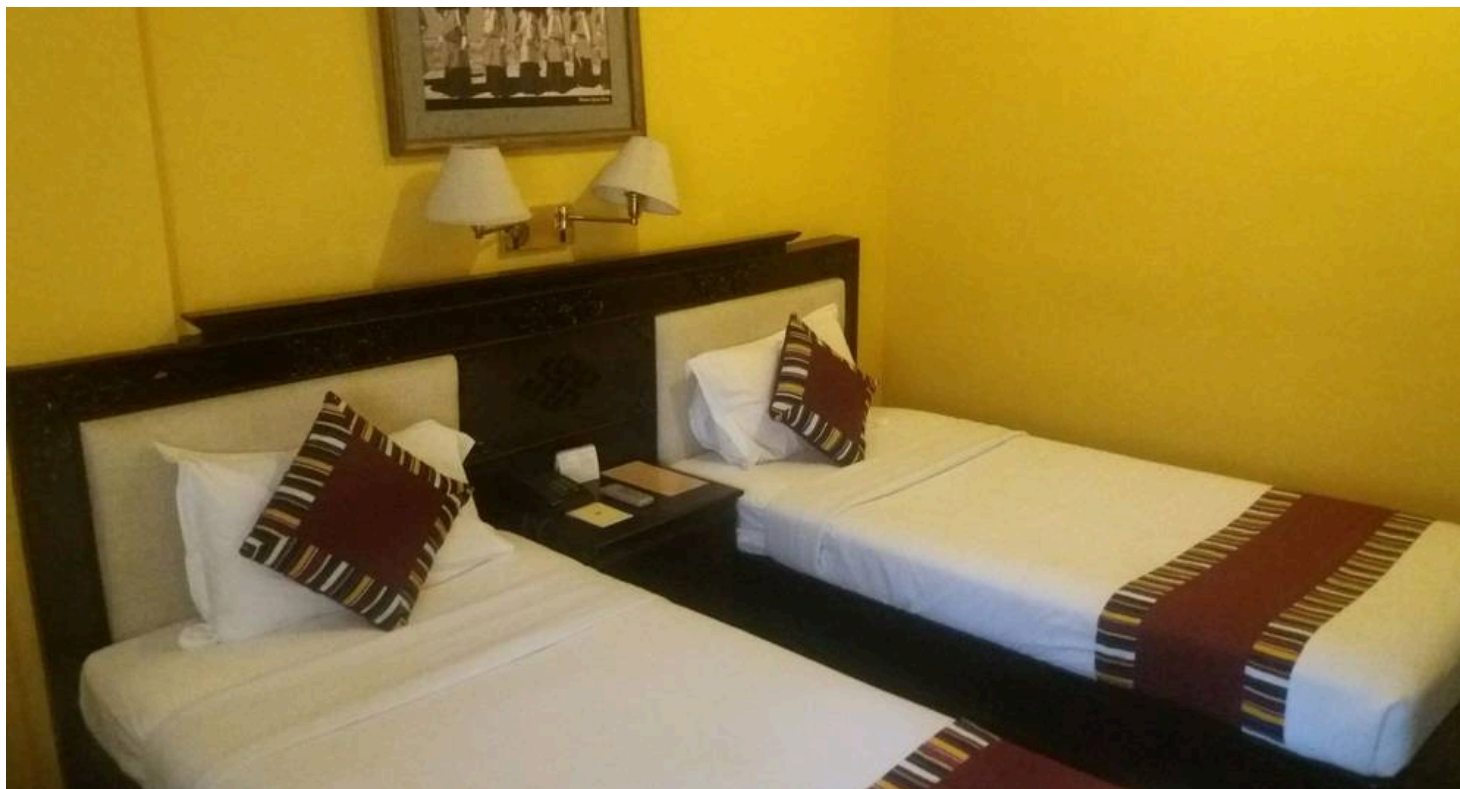
This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and the time of day. In the mountains between 1,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool, normally around 5°C, and during the day

temperatures sometimes rise to 25°C. At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 15°C to -10°C.

The traditional trekking season in Nepal is late September to May, with October and November generally recognised as having the best weather. Spring is also a popular time of year with warmer weather.

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.

TEAHOUSE LODGE IN NEPAL



While on trek at a teahouse lodge in Nepal there are twin share rooms with common bathroom and a heated communal dining room.

We will provide all meals at the lodges and include breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and biscuits plus two course dinner (soup and main meal) plus up to two cups of hot drinks per meal. We regularly inspect and select the best lodges in each location.

Notes downloaded on: 14-08-2020

