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Upper Dolpo To Upper Mustang Trek

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Highlights of Upper Dolpo and Upper Mustang

Ancient monasteries like Shy Gumpa

Traditional Tibetan festivals

The strong influence of Tibetan Buddhism

Less crowded trails

Challenging high-altitude trek (20-25 days)

Requires special permits

Capital city Lo Manthang, a walled city with a history of kings and monasteries

Tibetan Buddhist traditions

Arid terrain with colorful rock formations

The rich history and preserved culture

Trip Overview

The Upper Dolpo to Upper Mustang Trek is an adventurous journey. It is perfect for adventure seekers. The trek will cross two of the Himalayas' most mysterious and culturally rich regions. They are often

shrouded in mystery and called the “forbidden kingdoms.” Upper Dolpo and [Upper Mustang Trek](#) offer a chance to step back in time. You can experience the magic of the Trans-Himalayas.

Upper Dolpo, nicknamed “the land beyond the Himalayas,” is a hidden paradise. Dramatic mountains frame deep valleys. The valleys cradle crystal-clear lakes, such as the famed Phoksundo Lake. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This trekker’s haven boasts a unique cultural identity. Explore ancient Bon villages. Immerse yourself in traditions untouched by time. Upper Dolpo promises an off-the-beaten-path adventure. Prepare for isolation. It becomes an unforgettable part of the experience.

In stark contrast, Upper Mustang is a region steeped in Tibetan culture. Towering red cliffs and fascinating cave dwellings dot the dramatic landscapes. Lo Manthang, a majestic walled city, serves as the crown jewel. Once a separate kingdom, Upper Mustang protects its traditional ways of life. This adds to its mystique. Entering this restricted region requires special permits, further enhancing its allure. Enjoy vibrant prayer flags fluttering in the wind. Hear the echoes of ancient traditions.

Upper Dolpo To Upper Mustang Trek Distance

The trek from Upper Dolpo to Upper Mustang is about 400 to 500 kilometers. The exact distance depends on the route and any side trips or detours. The actual distance of the trek can vary depending on the particular itinerary and route chosen. *Treks cover about 15 to 25 kilometers daily. The distance depends on the altitude gain, terrain, and weather.*

The trek typically takes 3 to 4 weeks, including days for acclimatization and rest. The distance mentioned here is approximate. The distance during the trek may vary based on trekking speeds, side trips, and rest days. Several factors affect the trek’s distance. These include the weather, trail conditions, and acclimatization stops.

Trip Itinerary

Day : Juphal (2,475m) to Dunai (2,140m)

Your adventure begins with a scenic flight to Juphal, a remote airstrip in the Dolpo region. The day’s trek is a pleasant stroll. It goes along the Thuli Bheri River. It offers a gentle intro to the nearby landscapes.

Day : Dunai (2,140m) to Tarakot (2,537m)

The trail picks up its pace as you ascend towards Tarakot. This ancient fortress town, steeped in history, will be your destination for the night. Explore its watchtowers and ramparts. Soak in the unique feel of this old town.

Day : Tarakot (2,537m) to Laini (3,160m)

Prepare for breathtaking scenery today. The route winds through pretty landscapes. It has many river crossings that add an adventurous touch. You can witness many types of plants and animals and see them as you climb towards Laini, your overnight stop.

Day : Laini (3,160m) to Nawarpani (3,545m)

On this day, the challenge increases. Trekkers will navigate beautiful canyons and rugged trails to Nawarpani. The captivating landscape will keep you company. You'll see it as you conquer switchbacks and immerse in the region's remoteness.

Day : Nawarpani (3,545m) to Dho Tarap (4,090m)

Today's trek takes you to Dho Tarap, a high-altitude village with solid Tibetan influences. The climb is significant. So, trekkers need to pace themselves. Enjoy the stunning views that appear as you go up. Prepare to be warmly welcomed by the local people in Dho Tarap.

Day : Acclimatization Day in Dho Tarap (4,090m)

Dedicating a day to acclimatization in Dho Tarap is crucial, so rest or explore the village and its monasteries on this day. This rest day will also help your body adjust to the higher altitude and prepare you to tackle the rugged pass.

Day : Dho Tarap (4,090m) to Numa La Base Camp (4,440m)

The adventure intensifies as you journey towards Numa La Base Camp. The trail offers dramatic views of the peaks. The ascent is challenging. But the views make it worthwhile. Prepare for breathtaking sunsets and starry nights at the base camp.

Day : Cross Numa La Pass (5,310m) to Danigar (4,520m)

Conquer the mighty Numa La Pass, a challenging yet rewarding experience. The panoramic mountain views from the top will leave you speechless. Descend to Danigar, a quaint village in a beautiful valley, where you will rest for the night.

Day : Danigar (4,520m) to Yak Kharka (3,982m)

Today's trek takes you on a scenic descent through lush valleys. Enjoy the change in scenery as you leave the high-altitude terrain behind. Yak Kharka, your destination for the night, offers a welcome respite.

Day : Yak Kharka (3,982m) to Jomsom (2,743m)

The trail rejoins the famous Annapurna Circuit route today. As you descend towards Jomsom, the landscape transforms and offers a taste of the more visited trekking areas. You can also celebrate reaching this vibrant town, a trekking hub in the region.

Day : Jomsom (2,743m) to Kagbeni (2,804m)

An easy walk from Jomsom brings you to Kagbeni, the gateway to Upper Mustang. This town is unique because of Tibetan influences mixed with Hindu traditions here, and this place marks the start of a new chapter in your journey.

Day : Kagbeni (2,804m) to Chele (3,050m)

Prepare to be captivated by the unique landscapes of Upper Mustang. The trail on this day offers a glimpse of the dramatic terrain that awaits you in the days to come. Chele, your overnight stop, will introduce you to the region's architectural style.

Day : Chele to Syangboche (3,800 meters)

Today's trail winds along cliff-side paths and offers breathtaking views of the immense Kali Gandaki Gorge. Trekkers can explore intriguing caves along the way, adding a touch of mystery to their adventure. The challenging ascent culminates in Syangboche, a village perched precariously on a mountainside. Here, breathtaking panoramas of the surrounding peaks will leave you speechless.

Day : Syangboche to Ghemi (3,520 meters)

Immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Upper Mustang's culture. The trail winds through a landscape dotted with old monasteries and chortens. They are silent signs of the region's deep spirituality. Explore these historical sites. You can marvel at the detailed stonework and colorful prayer flags on the chortens. You will descend toward Ghemi. It is a charming village nestled in vibrant apricot orchards. You will spend the night there.

Day : Ghemi to Lo Manthang (3,840 meters)

Today's trek leads you to Lo Manthang, the ancient walled city and capital of Upper Mustang. As you approach, you will see the imposing city walls. They rise from the plains and will heighten your anticipation. Explore the narrow, cobbled streets lined with old houses—Marvel at the majestic Raja's Palace. Lose yourself in the winding alleys filled with local life. Spend the day wandering through the bustling marketplace. Soak in the lively atmosphere. It is part of the rich cultural tapestry of this captivating kingdom.

Additional Trip Information

Best Route from Upper Dolpo to Mustang Trek

Day 1: Arrival in Juphal

Your adventure begins in Juphal. It is a remote airstrip nestled in the majestic peaks of Dolpo. Breathe in the crisp mountain air and take some time to adjust to the high altitude. Today, trekkers will prepare and organize themselves and meet their fellow trekkers and guides. Enjoy a delicious meal and a restful night's sleep in Juphal. Rest up for the exciting journey ahead.

Day 2: Juphal to Dunai

The trek kicks off with a scenic walk along the Thuli Bheri River. Green plants cover the lower slopes. Snowy mountains rise far away. You can watch colorful birds flitting through the trees, and unique mountain animals graze on the slopes. The trail passes through charming villages and terraced fields and offers a glimpse into the rural life of the Dolpo region. Dunai, a picturesque town along the riverbank, will be your home for the night.

Day 3: Dunai to Tarakot

Today's trail picks up the pace as you leave Dunai behind and ascend towards Tarakot. The path winds through landscapes that change gradually and offer a diverse tapestry of nature's beauty. Lush forests give way to rugged mountains, and the air thins slightly as you gain altitude. Be on the lookout for ancient chortens and prayer flags on the path, which add a spiritual touch to the journey. Finally, you'll arrive at Tarakot, an ancient fortress town steeped in history. Explore its watchtowers and ramparts.

Day 4: Tarakot to Laini

Today, you will continue your trek by navigating narrow gorges and crossing the Tarap River. The rough terrain will test your body. But, the reward is a growing view of the Himalayas. You will pass through charming villages and offer a glimpse into this remote region's local way of life. Laini, a small town nestled amidst towering peaks, will be your destination for the night.

Day 5: Laini to Nawarpani

Today's challenge level increases as you journey towards Nawarpani, where this trail navigates beautiful canyons with sheer rock walls that scrape the sky. Rugged mountain paths are lined with colorful prayer flags. They will keep you company as you conquer switchbacks and soak in the region's remoteness. The constant change in elevation offers a taste of the diverse landscapes that lie ahead. As you ascend, the air thins further, so be sure to pace yourself and stay hydrated. Nawarpani, a village perched atop a scenic plateau, will be your rest stop for the night.

Day 6: Nawarpani to Dho Tarap

Today's trek takes you to Dho Tarap, a high-altitude village with Tibetan influences. Take your time and enjoy the stunning panoramas because the climb is significant. Get ready for a warm welcome by the Dho Tarap locals and experience their unique culture and traditions. You can get a chance to relax and acclimate to the higher altitude. Then, you can tackle the challenging pass.

Day 7: Acclimatization Day in Dho Tarap

Dedicating a day to acclimatization in Dho Tarap is crucial for a safe and enjoyable trek. Please take

advantage of this time to explore the village and its monasteries. Learn and interact with the locals and learn about their way of life. Enjoy the peace of this remote village. This rest day will also help your body adjust to the thinner air before conquering the mighty Numa La Pass.

Day 8: Dho Tarap to Numa La Base Camp

The adventure intensifies as you journey towards Numa La Base Camp. Even though it is a significant challenge, the reward is breathtaking. As you gain altitude, the air thins further, so listen to your body and take breaks whenever needed. The views of the peaks from the base camp are spectacular and will leave you speechless. They make the challenging climb worth it.

Day 9: Cross Numa La Pass to Danigar

Brace yourself. You face the most challenging day. You will conquer the mighty Numa La Pass, the trek's highest point at 5,310 meters. You will see panoramic views of the surrounding Himalayan giants. After reaching the summit, descend to Danigar (4,520 meters) for a well-deserved rest in a cozy teahouse.

Day 10: Danigar to Yak Kharka

Today offers a scenic descent through beautiful valleys adorned with vibrant wildflowers. You'll encounter yak herder camps, a classic sight in Mustang. You'll also see charming villages that hint at the region's traditional way of life. Yak Kharka, a small town with picturesque scenery, will be your home for the night.

Day 11: Yak Kharka to Jomsom

Descend towards Jomsom (2,743 meters), rejoining the well-established Annapurna Circuit route. The landscape softens as you go to lower altitudes. Green plants replace the stark beauty of the higher mountains. Jomsom, a bustling town with shops and cafes, offers a welcome respite. Here, you can relax and restock. You can also savor the return to civilization after the challenging high-altitude sections.

Day 12: Jomsom to Kagbeni

The gateway to Upper Mustang awaits! Trek to Kagbeni (2,804 meters), a town marking the entry point to this unique region. See the dramatic Kali Gandaki River carve its path through the valley. Admire the distinct architectural style with flat-roofed mudbrick houses. You will explore the lively marketplace and the impressive Kagbeni Gumpa monastery. You will immerse yourself in the mix of Tibetan and Thakali cultures.

Day 13: Kagbeni to Chele

Embark on your Upper Mustang adventure! The trek from Kagbeni to Chele (3,050 meters) starts your exploration of this hidden kingdom. The trail passes through villages with traditional architecture, showcasing the region's rich heritage. As you walk the path, get ready to see the awe-inspiring beauty of Upper Mustang. It will captivate you. Chele, a charming mountain village, will be your overnight stop.

Day 14: Chele to Syangboche

Today's hike is from Chele (3,050 meters) to Syangboche (3,800 meters). It takes you along thrilling cliff-side paths with jaw-dropping mountain views. This challenging day will test your legs but reward you with unforgettable panoramas. After conquering the trails, relax and soak it all in at your cozy overnight stay in Syangboche.

Day 15: Syangboche to Ghemi

Step back as you descend from Syangboche (3,800 meters) to Ghemi (3,520 meters). Today's trek is a treasure trove of Mustang's rich history. See ancient monasteries and chortens (stone Buddhist shrines) along the route. They offer a glimpse into the heart of this unique culture. Ghemi, a charming village steeped in tradition, will be your home for the night.

Day 16: Ghemi to Lo Manthang

The crown jewel awaits! Embark on a journey of anticipation. You will trek towards Lo Manthang (3,840 meters), the ancient walled city and capital of Upper Mustang. The adventure lasts 6-7 hours. It leads you to a place frozen in time. The place has a historical and vibrant culture. Get ready to be amazed by the unique architecture and lively atmosphere of Lo Manthang. You will settle in for your overnight stay in this legendary city.

Day 17: Explore Lo Manthang

Immerse yourself in the timeless charm of Lo Manthang, the crown jewel of Upper Mustang. Explore the ancient, fortified walls that whisper tales of a bygone era. Visit the Royal Palace. It is now a museum. Also, visit atmospheric gompas (monasteries) adorned with intricate Buddhist artwork. Engage with the friendly locals and learn about their unique culture. Climb the highest point in Lo Manthang for great views.

Explore the Chodheng Gompa, a centuries-old monastery perched on the hill. Wander through the busy marketplace. Soak in the lively atmosphere. Then, savor a delicious local meal. Enjoy a night under a sky filled with stars. You can do so from your comfortable accommodation as dusk settles.

Day 18: Lo Manthang to Ghar Gompa

Delve into Mustang's past on a trek from Lo Manthang (3,840 meters) to Ghar Gompa. This 6-7 hour journey culminates at a hidden gem - the Ghar Gompa monastery. Nestled amidst ancient cave dwellings, this revered site whispers tales of centuries past. Prepare for a night unlike any other under the starlit sky near the historic Ghar Gompa.

Day 19: Ghar Gompa to Samar

Bid farewell to Ghar Gompa and embark on a scenic trek to Samar (overnight stay). Witness the dramatic red cliffs of Dhakmar as the landscape unfolds its beauty. Charming villages dot the route, offering a glimpse into the local way of life in Upper Mustang. Savor the final night amidst this captivating backdrop before your return journey.

Day 20: Samar to Jomsom

Today marks your return to Jomsom (2,743 meters). The 6-7 hour trek from Samar provides a sense of accomplishment as you retrace your steps. Jomsom, with its modern amenities, welcomes you back with open arms. Enjoy a hot shower. Then, have a delicious meal. Perhaps, toast to your incredible adventure in the Himalayas.

Day 21: Departure from Jomsom

This bittersweet day marks the end of your unforgettable trek. You went from Upper Dolpo to Upper Mustang. Choose your departure method - a scenic flight from Jomsom or a return drive to Pokhara. As

you depart, carry memories of stunning landscapes. Remember the rich cultures and the challenges overcome. The Himalayas will forever hold a special place in your heart.

Trek Difficulty

Trekking in the Dolpo region is challenging. The Upper Dolpo to Mustang trek is long and hard, but the area is remote and rugged. Because of its high altitude, the weather is unpredictable. This trek includes crossing many high mountain passes, including Kang La Pass (5,360m) and Num La Pass (5,190m). Trekkers might find these crossings tricky and need good fitness and acclimatization.

One of the main challenges of this trek is altitude. Because high altitude breathing is more complicated and raises the risk of altitude-related illnesses, like mountain sickness (AMS), so proper acclimatization is crucial to reduce the risk. The weather in Dolpo can also be challenging. Temperatures vary significantly between day and night. Prepare yourself with all your wealth and the right gear. This includes warm clothes and waterproof layers.

The trekking trails in Dolpo present a rugged and remote terrain, so there is a need for careful footing and balance. This makes some parts steep and rocky. Because of the region's remoteness, facilities like teahouses and lodges are limited. It would help if you were self-sufficient, carried the necessary supplies, and prepared properly, which includes training, acclimatization, and gear. You can then safely enjoy the beauty and peace of this remote Himalayan region.

Best Time for Trek

Spring (March to May):

Spring is among the best times to trek in the Himalayas, including Upper Dolpo and Upper Mustang. During this time, the weather is generally stable, with clear skies and mild temperatures. During this season, the rhododendrons and their wildflowers are in full bloom. Days are longer, allowing for more comfortable and enjoyable trekking experiences. Many people enjoy trekking in spring, so the trails and tea houses can become crowded.

Autumn (September to November):

Autumn is another excellent time to trek in this region. The air is clear and stable. It's cold during the day and cool at night. The skies are generally clear, offering stunning views of the surrounding mountains. Autumn is the harvest season. Local communities are busy with farming. The trails are less crowded than in spring, making the trek more peaceful.

Monsoon Season (June to August):

From June to August, the monsoon season could be better for trekking. This is true in Upper Dolpo and Upper Mustang. Heavy rainfall may lead to landslides, muddy trails, and leeches during this season. The rain can also obstruct mountain views, improving the overall trekking experience.

Winter (December to February):

Winter is also not ideal for trekking in this region. Temperatures can drop a lot, especially at higher altitudes. Snow can make the trails hard. During this time, authorities may also close houses and

facilities on the TrekKing route.

Major Attractions

Shey Phoksundo Lake:

Snow-capped peaks nestle the lake in a dramatic canvas. The lake, called Shey Phoksundo, shines in jewel tones and is at a high altitude. It shimmers with an ethereal turquoise hue. It reflects the grandeur of the mountains around it. Its pristine waters and serene ambiance create a perfect postcard to come to life.

Cultural Encounters:

You interact with the local communities and experience their unique culture and traditions. This is one of the trek's highlights. Upper Dolpo and Upper Mustang people are primarily of Tibetan descent and have a rich cultural heritage. Trekkers can see traditional ceremonies. They can taste local food and learn about the local way of life. This adds depth to their trek.

Monasteries - Spiritual Sanctuaries:

Upper Dolpo and Upper Mustang have many monasteries and are the heart of the local communities. Building there stands as a testament to the region's profound spiritual beliefs. Trekkers can explore renowned monasteries like *Shey Gompa*, *Thubuche Gompa*, and *Muktinath Gompa*. *Each has a unique history and style.*

Conquering High Altitude Passes:

The trek challenges you. You will go up many high mountain passes—for example, the Kang La (5,360 meters) and the Nangdala La (5,385 meters). The arduous climb is more than compensated by the awe-inspiring panoramas before you. It is an endless chain of snow-capped Himalayan giants. They stretch across the horizon, a sight that will leave you breathless and etch into your memory.

Important Places to Visit

Phoksundo Lake:

Phoksundo Lake, the deepest lake in Nepal, is a breathtaking alpine lake in the [Dolpo](#) region. This lake is renowned for its crystal-clear water. This lake reflects the snow-capped peaks and is a picturesque destination for trekkers. The Phoksundo Lake is also home to diverse wildlife. It includes the elusive snow leopard.

Shey Phoksundo National Park:

Shey Phoksundo National Park is a sprawling park. It serves as a sanctuary for diverse wildlife. Trekkers can get the opportunity to see the elusive snow leopard. It's known as the "ghost of the mountains." We might also spot the majestic blue sheep and the sure-footed Himalayan tahr. They gracefully navigate the rugged terrain. The trek is ideal for natural wonders. It has glistening glimmers and verdant forests. It

offers a glimpse into the art of the Himalayan ecosystem.

Shey Gompa:

Shey Gompa is a historic monastery at an altitude of 4,126 meters. It has a history of over 800 years and is one of the oldest and most important monasteries in the Dolpo region. This monastery is in the Himalayas. It's known for its stunning location, ancient Buddhist art, and scripture. Shey Gompa is also a popular destination for meditation and spiritual retreats.

Lomangtang:

Lo Manthang is famous for its unique [Tibetan culture](#) and architecture and stands at an altitude of 3,840 meters. It is the ancient walled city and capital of the former Kingdom of Mustang. In Lo Manthang, there are many ancient monasteries, palaces, temples, and mudbrick houses, and it is one of the most important places to visit.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get to the starting point?

You can get there by flying or driving from Kathmandu to Pokhara. Then, take a short flight or jeep ride from Pokhara to Jomsom.

What permits do I need?

Before starting the trek, you must get a Restricted Area Permit. It costs USD 500 for the first ten days and USD 50 for each extra day. It would help if you also had an Annapurna Conservation Area Permit, which costs around USD 30.

How long is the trek?

The trek typically lasts 12-14 days, depending on the road and weather conditions.

How challenging is the trek?

The trek is moderately challenging, with a maximum altitude of around 4,200 meters (13,780 feet).

What kind of accommodation is available?

Tea houses and lodges offering basic facilities are available along the route.

Do I need a guide for Upper Dolpo To Upper Mustang Trek?

Yes, it would be best to have a licensed guide, as it is mandatory for the trek.

What should I pack?

You should bring warm layers and a waterproof jacket. Also, bring boots and sleeping bags. Also, bring poles, sun protection, water purification tablets, and a first aid kit.

Is the trek suitable for beginners?

The trek suits those with good fitness. But we recommend having some prior trekking experience.

What's unique about Upper Mustang?

The trek offers a unique Tibetan-influenced culture, arid landscapes, and ancient monasteries.

What is the altitude range of the Upper Mustang Trek?

The trek ranges from 2,800 meters (9,186 feet) in Jomsom to around 4,200 meters (13,780 feet) at the Lo La Pass.

Are there ATMs or banks available on the trek?

There are no ATMs or banks along the trekking route. So, it would help if you carried enough cash for the entire trek.

What kind of food is available during the trek?

Tea houses and lodges offer many meals. These include traditional Nepali dishes like dal bhat.

Is it possible to charge electronic devices during the trek?

Yes, most tea houses offer charging facilities for a small fee.

Do I need travel insurance for the Upper Mustang Trek?

Yes, it's wise to have travel insurance. It should cover high-altitude trekking and emergency evacuation.

What is the average daily walking distance?

The average daily walking distance is about 10-15 kilometers.

Address

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