

Dolpo to Mugu Reconnaissance Trek

Trip Code: DTM

Version: DTM Dolpo to Mugu Trek



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



TOUGH



HIGHLIGHTS

- One of the great trekking challenges of the Nepal Himalaya
- Beautiful Phoksumdo Lake, one of Nepal's special places
- Bhijer, Pho and Mugu, three of the most remote villages in Nepal
- Views of the little-known Kanjiroba Himal from the Nyingma Gyanzen La
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday

AT A GLANCE

- 23 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5500 metres
- Join at Kathmandu

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 23 nights Camping
- 3 nights Hotel with swimming pool

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Beyond Dhaulagiri (8167m), the world's seventh highest summit, the high and wild territory of Dolpo extends for scores of kilometres, northwards into Tibet and westwards to the remote district and settlement of Mugu. Accessed by way of the airstrip at Juphal, the few fortunate travellers who visit Dolpo each season confirm that it's home to some of the best trekking in the Himalayas. A network of scant trails penetrates this far-flung region and links together its steep-sided valleys, villages and age-old Buddhist monasteries.

The Dolpo-pa are of Tibetan stock and make their livings from herding goats and yaks and growing a few hardy crops in irrigated fields alongside their stone-built and fortress-like villages. Trading across the border into Tibet has also traditionally been important here and continues to this day. Over the course of 3 decades, numerous KE groups have visited Dolpo and undertaken a variety of different itineraries; but we have never attempted anything quite as ambitious as this. North of the stunning Phoksumdo Lake and Shey Gompa our route continues via Samling Monastery to Bhijer and Pho, then northwards again towards the Tibetan border, before finally turning westwards to cross the Nyingma Gyanzen La (5500m) and 2 further 5000 metres passes in the course of a long and difficult passage to Mugu across the north-western corner of the Shey Phoksomdo National Park. Supposedly an old smugglers route, this is also one of the variants of the Great Himalaya Trail; but almost no-one ever treks this way. From Shey Gompa to the airstrip at Talcha, close to Rara Lake, there are 2 full weeks of trekking that make up one of the most challenging and exciting traverses in the Nepalese Himalaya. On the middle section of about a week there are no villages and the chances of meeting anyone other than the occasional yak herder is almost nil. However, the rewards are immense. This is really remote, almost off the map, trekking and the scenery is second to none with magnificent views from the high passes, south to the little-known Kanjiroba Himal and north into Tibet. A KE group completed this challenging trekking adventure in October/November 2023 and it is highly recommended for experienced Himalayan travellers.

Is this holiday for you?

This trek through the Shey Phoksumdo National Park offers a variety of trekking conditions from well-maintained paths between villages to rarely used trails over rock and scree. With many long trekking days, several 5000-metre pass crossings and the passage of several long sections of difficult and steep-sided valley with the probability of a number of unbridged river crossings, this will undoubtedly be a tough trek and we have given it our second highest trekking grade. A good level of fitness is needed for this trip and a head for heights is also required as there will be some tricky and exposed trails which could involve the setting up of a safety line at times. This holiday will provide a challenge even for fit and confident trekkers with appropriate experience of high-level Himalayan travel. The information that we

have included about daily distances, height gain and the number of hours of trekking is based on the actual experience of a group completing this itinerary, but you should be prepared for considerable inaccuracy in these figures. This is a camping trek with a full Nepalese crew, spacious 2-person tents, foam mattresses, a dining tent with a table and chairs and a toilet tent. However, please note that there are likely to be one or two less than ideal camping places where we can set up only a restricted camp.

Itinerary

Version: DTM Dolpo to Mugu Trek

DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers from Kathmandu Airport are provided.

Your holiday starts at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers from Kathmandu Airport are provided. Depending on your arrival time, you may have the opportunity to explore the immediate vicinity of the hotel and get acclimatised to this bustling city. Alternatively, you may prefer to recover from your journey by relaxing beside the hotel pool. Your guide will take dinner with you and will provide an informal briefing about the days ahead.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation

Hotel with swimming pool

DAY 2

Fly to Nepalgunj.

The morning is free to relax or for sightseeing and shopping in Thamel for any extra gear needed for the trek. In the afternoon we take a short flight to the Indian-Nepal border town of Nepalgunj in the lowland Terai region. The climate here is sub tropical and we will be relieved to reach the relative cool of our guesthouse. We stay overnight in Nepalgunj.


Meals: **B L D**

DAY 3

Early start for the flight to Juphal where we begin our trek to Rupghat (2050m).

Flights into Dolpo are always early in the morning since the anabatic winds of the Thulo Bheri Valley prevent afternoon flights, rather like Jomsom in the Kali Gandaki further east. We therefore have an early start for the spectacular 40 minute flight. At Juphal we meet our trek crew and after an early lunch, during which final preparation are made and the baggage is assigned to our porters, we set out downhill to the river and our first night's camp at Rupghat (2050m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 430M		Descent 790M		Time 2 - 3 hrs trekking		Distance 6KM
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DAY 4

Trek to Chepka (2850m), crossing the tributary Anke Khola.

The Suli Khola flows down from Phoksumdo Lake through a steep and highly vegetated valley. The trail undulates, sometimes beside and sometimes high above the tumbling white-water river. There are scattered villages along the route including the deserted crude stone houses of Jyalhasa where we take our lunch. Many of these villages are only occupied during the winter months when the communities of Upper Dolpo bring their animals down from the high pastures and at the time of our trek they can be almost hidden in an overgrowth of tall grasses. After lunch we cross the Anke Khola and it can be quite hot as we make our way up the river to our campsite at Chepka (2850m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1400M		Descent 600M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 16KM
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DAY 5

Ascend the gorge to Renje (2940m) and overnight at the village of Samduwa (3085m).

We cross and re-cross the river today as we make our way up the narrow gorge, ascending the undulating trail through forests of bamboo, and conifer. As yesterday, we are sometimes high above tumbling waterfalls and at others the trail is right beside the river or with stepping stones providing the only means of keeping feet dry where the river cuts into the steep bank. At one point the trail climbs steadily for an hour or more to bring us out of the forest and into flower-strewn meadows. Eventually the valley opens up a little and the going becomes easier until we reach a bridge leading to several houses which make up the village of Renje. Beyond here the valley narrows once more and the trail continues to climb and descend as we negotiate spurs of the steep hillside. At the confluence of the Suli Khola and Pungmo Khola we cross to the west bank and reach the village of Samduwa (3085m) where we make camp.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1130M		Descent 895M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 6**Trek to Palam and Ringmo and on to Phoksumdo Lake (3600m).**

From Samduwa upwards, the river is known as the Phoksumdo Khola and runs crystal clear from the lake. We pass Palam, another deserted winter village and climb up to a ridge which separates the open fields of Ringmo from the narrow valley below. A roaring waterfall, one of the highest in Nepal, lies below us and we get our first glimpse of Phoksumdo Lake. Descending steeply through the forest we then climb steadily to reach the charming Dolpo-pa settlement of Ringmo with its collection of flat roofed stone houses, stuccoed chortens and long walls of prayer-carved mani stones. Just below the village we cross the river and follow it to the lake where we set up camp at an elevation of around 3600 metres.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1400M		Descent 885M		Time 6 - 7 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 7**Vital acclimatisation day at Phoksumdo Lake.**

It is necessary to spend a day here to give our bodies' time to acclimatise to the new altitude. This will also be a welcome rest after the last few days of trekking and a chance to catch up on laundry. There are various options for excursions in this fantastic location and a visit to Ringmo and its overlooking monastery is a must.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping
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DAY 8**Trek the spectacular lakeside trail to a ridge at 4000 metres, then descend to camp north of the lake.**

It is not possible to proceed north of Phoksumdo Lake without the special Inner Dolpo permit. We start our trek to Shey Gumpa in Inner Dolpo with a spectacular trail around the western end of the lake. The precarious path is chiseled from the steep rock walls and in places is supported on wooden trestles woven with saplings and covered with rocks. The sparkling pure turquoise waters of the lake lie directly below and it is wise to proceed with full attention to your footing. This trail was dramatically featured in Eric Valli's brilliant film about the life of the people of Dolpo who bring their yaks over difficult passes bearing salt from Tibet to trade for vital grain in the south. The film was originally released with the title 'Caravan' but later this was changed to 'Himalaya'. After this high traverse, the trail climbs to a ridge giving spectacular views over the lake, the dark green forest, and the bright fields of Ringmo with the

snow peak of Kang Norbu to the south. A cairn and prayer flags mark our highpoint on the ridge a little above 4000 metres, beyond which we make a gradual descent to the lake's northern shore where we take lunch. We ascend a wide flat valley with scattered knee-high thorn bushes and across sponge-like turf criss-crossed with several tributary streams, to reach a drier 'alpine' zone of conifers where we make camp (3700m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 800M		Descent 700M		Time 6 hrs trekking		Distance 13KM
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DAY 9

Trek to Snowfields Camp (4600m) at the foot of the Kang La.

The Phoksumdo Valley now becomes quite narrow with high rock walls on both sides. We are forced to cross several tributaries and some may have to be waded. After 20 or 30 minutes we leave the main valley and head north again entering a narrow gorge. We have a long climb, often with no trace of any trail as we progress up the steep sided valley, passing occasional grazing areas and crossing several side streams. We are following in Peter Mathiesson's footsteps here and we camp at the spot he named 'Snowfields Camp' in his book. The camp is at the foot of the pass that will lead us to Inner Dolpo. The altitude at camp is approximately 4600 metres.

Meals: **B L D**



	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1200M		Descent 300M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 8KM
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DAY 10

Cross the Kang La (5350m) into Inner Dolpo and Shey Gompa (4370m).

It will take 2 to 3 hours from our camp, climbing awkwardly on loose slatey scree slopes which may have a covering of snow, to reach the summit of the Kang La (5350m). This high pass into Inner Dolpo is also known locally as the Ngadra La and is adorned with cairns and prayer flags. We make a steep descent of around 45 minutes to the valley floor and follow the river easily for a further 3 hours to reach Shey Gompa, the entrance of which is marked by a red and white chorten and snaking lines of mani stones. The monastery is located beneath the strange Crystal Mountain on a small grassy area at the confluence of two rivers. Physically the gompa, surrounded by half a dozen red-painted buildings, is not very imposing, but the setting is very dramatic and there is no doubt why this place is so revered by both Buddhists and followers of the Bon religion. We set up our camp just below the gompa in a meadow containing a few herders' huts.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 900M		Descent 1130M		Time 6 - 7 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 11

A day for rest and exploration at Shey Gompa.

We have a day to explore the environs and to catch up on laundry and other camp chores. A worthwhile side trip is to visit the amazing Kagyupa monastery of Tsa Kang which is perched on a narrow ledge high on a cliff face. To get there we have to climb part way on the trail which pilgrims follow to make the 'Kora' or circuit of the Crystal Mountain. We can also check out Shey Gompa again, before spending a second night at the same meadow camp.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping
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DAY 12

Trek to Samling Monastery (4120m) or camp at Tora before Samling.

Our trail heads north from Shey Gompa, cutting up the hillside on the east side of the Tartan Khola and skirting around at the head of a tributary valley to a high grazing area near the Den La. Following a broad stock trail across the open hillside, we drop down to Tora where the people from Bhijer graze their yaks in the summer. Depending on how long it has taken to get here, we could set up camp at Tora (4500m) or drop down to Samling Monastery (4120m).

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 500M		Descent 750M		Time 6 - 7 hrs trekking		Distance 15KM
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DAY 13

Samling Monastery and trek to Bhijer (3850m).

Established in the 8th century, Samling is the oldest Bon Gompa in Dolpo. Its several white and brick-red buildings and chortens are scattered across a grassy slope and adorned with prayer flags. We will spend some time looking around and hopefully meet one or two of the monks who live here. From Samling it's just a short walk to the village of Bhijer (3850m), a pleasant, welcoming and very 'Tibetan' village which sees very few trekkers. The house at Bhijer typically have an upper living space with the ground floor

being used to shelter animals at night. The village has an open, sunny location and there's lots to see and do here. Look out for the local women doing their spinning, watch the barley harvest or visit the gumpa. There is also a simple school, shop and a health post. This is the last place where the cook team may be able to purchase some fresh vegetables before reaching Mugu.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 300M		Descent 570M		Time 3 hrs trekking		Distance 8KM
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DAY 14

Cross the Yambur La (4800m) and descend to the Tora Khola (3400m).

Leaving Bhijar and heading north again, the first obstacle we are faced with is the Yambur La (4800m). It's a pretty abrupt climb on a zig-zagging trail which is likely to take us 4 hours. Look out for the wild blue sheep (bharal) which are not uncommon in this area. Look out also for the deep blue gentians that grow alongside the trail. Beyond the pass, we'll drop down through the remains of the long-deserted village of Potal and continue descending steeply for another hour to the Tora Khola (3400m). It's warmer down here and there's just about room to camp close to the old wooden cantilever bridge.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1150M		Descent 1500M		Time 7 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 15

A short trek to Pho (4020m). Afternoon free.

Just a short stage today; we'll aim to reach camp at Pho in the late morning and have lunch there. We head downstream (north) for about half an hour and then turn to head westwards and steeply uphill to the small village of Pho (4020m) which may be the most remote settlement Nepal. Few people live here now and there are signs that the numbers are dwindling. Some of the fields on the edge of the village are eroded and no longer maintained. Nevertheless, Pho is a good place to make camp with level pitches and a clean and plentiful water supply.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 720M		Descent 100M		Time 3 - 4 hrs trekking		Distance 5KM
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DAY 16**Trek to a high camp (4900m) before the Nyingma Gyanzen La.**

Leaving Pho and heading west, then north, we have a steep climb for 2 to 3 hours on a yak trail which leads up to a mani (prayer) wall; a good place to take a break. Once again, we are likely to see lots of blue sheep on this part of our route. We then have a similar, if slightly less steep, continuation of the day's walk up to our high camp at 4900 metres below the Nyingma Gyanzen La. This is a potentially cold and exposed place, but the vast panorama southwards to the numerous 6000 to 6800 metre snow-peaks of the Kanjiroba Himal more than make up for that. There are no more villages until we reach the Mugu Khola, several days away, and there is a real feeling of being 'out there'. The only people who we might possibly meet up here are yak herders.





Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1000M		Descent 120M		Time 5 hrs trekking		Distance 8KM
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DAY 17**Cross the Nyingma Gyanzen La (5500m) to the Swaksa Khola.**

This will be a long and challenging but exciting day which starts out with a slow, grinding ascent of 2 to 3 hours up to the crest of one of the highest ridges in the area, marked by a couple of cairns and a few wind-tattered prayer flags at the Nyingma Gyanzen La (5500m). It feels like an achievement to reach this remote pass which has so far seen very few trekkers. It's another fantastic viewpoint; to the south are the snow covered Kanjirobas and to the north a multitude of unnamed peaks on the border between Nepal and Tibet. If we're lucky we might share the trail with traders and their amazing yaks which are the 'heavy goods vehicles' of the high Himalayas. We'll find a spot out of the wind to eat lunch before making the long, long descent to the Swaksa Khola (4500m). This is a magnificent valley trending north-south which clearly sees very few trekkers, although these high valleys are visited in early summer each year by local people searching for the valuable caterpillar-fungus known as yarsagumba.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 750M		Descent 1150M		Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking		Distance 10KM
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DAY 18**Cross the Yala La (5250m) to either the Marjung Khola or the Chyandi Khola (4800m).**

The route initially takes us alongside the Swaksa Khola and we can look out for the hoof marks of blue sheep and the pug marks of snow leopards in the sand beside the stream. We then turn left out of the

valley and make a long and sustained ascent across a grassy hillside to the Yala La (5250m) which we reach after about 3 hours. We'll spend a bit of time at the pass to enjoy more great views, snow-capped peaks in all directions, before setting off on the rocky descent into the valley of the Chyandi Khola. We reach our camp in the valley at an elevation of around 4800 metres in the late afternoon.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 900M		Descent 600M		Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking		Distance 10KM
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DAY 19

Descend the Chyandi Khola to a junction with the Takla Khola (3750m).

Today is a long and challenging day as we descend the Chyandi Khola. There is no well-made path and we have to negotiate a lot of difficult terrain, possibly including the use of a safety rope on some short sections. Progress is likely to be slow and we will need to ford the river several times. Equally, we will have to climb up above the river at times to find the best route and this will involve contouring on a poor trail for extended periods, before a final zig-zagging descent through ancient birch forest to the junction with the Takla Khola. A final river crossing on a log bridge before our arrival at camp may also require the use of a safety rope.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 400M		Descent 1450M		Time 8 hrs trekking		Distance 10KM
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DAY 20

Cross the Chyargo La (5100m) and descend to Thajuchaur (4000m).

Another long day, initially trekking to Chyargo La Phedi at 4300 metres and then steadily upwards to the cairn-marked Chyargo La (5100m), which we reach after around 5 hours. This is a bleak and rocky place but with amazing views which provide a great overview of some of the geography we have been travelling through over recent days. It really is wild terrain. A long descent then takes us into a gorge-like valley where the route becomes more tenuous again, with a mix of thick forest and several river crossings to negotiate. There is a place to camp at Thajuchaur at around 4000 metres elevation.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 1500M		Descent 1250M		Time 8 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 21**Trek to the Mugu River then up-valley to Mugu (3400m).**

It's a relatively short distance from our camp down to the Mugu Khola, but making progress through this steep-sided and forested valley remains time-consuming with several more river crossings. Thankfully, there are bridges for the last couple of these crossings, before we emerge quite suddenly into the valley of the Mugu Khola. Here, we meet the main trail that links Rara Lake to the south with the village of Mugu and Tibet to the north. The Great Himalaya Trail heads south from here, but we turn north (on the good trail) to Mugu which is about 3 hours away. There's a chance of encountering other trekkers on this trail. Arriving at Mugu (3400m), we set up camp on the broad, flat valley floor immediately below the village.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 300M		Descent 900M		Time 8 hrs trekking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 22**Rest day at Mugu. Or a contingency day.**

Viewed from the valley floor, Mugu is distinctive in appearance and very Tibetan in character. The houses seem to be built in a haphazard manner on the steep valley slope. The people of Mugu see few outside visitors and have very little connection with the region of Upper Dolpo where we started our trek. Their trade and cultural connections are northwards into Tibet and the border is opened by the Chinese in August to facilitate trading. There is even a 4WD road link which starts a few kilometres beyond Mugu and runs northwards into Tibet. If we have managed to keep to our schedule, this will be a free day to chill-out, eat, wash, spend time with the Mugu villagers or take a short walk northwards on the main trail. We spend a second night at Mugu.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping
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DAY 23**Trek to Pulu or Riisa (2250m).**

We have 3 days to trek to the airport at Talcha just to the east of Rara Lake and for the whole of this journey we will be on reasonably good trails that link the villages in the valley of the Mugu Karnali. On this first day we descend steadily to the confluence of the Mugu with the NamlangNadi at Tyar and continue westwards for a further hour or two to a camping place beside the river below one of two villages, either Pulu or a little further on, Riisa.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Camping	 Ascent 300M	 Descent 1450M	 Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking	 Distance 22KM
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DAY 24

Trek via Mangri to Kumpha (2010m).

Another longish day in terms of distance but no big climbs, just 'Nepali undulation' beside the river. Again, there are lots of great views and we'll have plenty of opportunity to interact with the local people that we meet on the trail. We pass through the striking settlement of Mangri which sits amongst its terraced fields on a bench above the south side of the river. Now heading in a south-westerly direction, we continue beside the Mugu Karnali through the village of Chhaila to a camping place close to the houses of Kumpha (2010m).

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Camping	 Ascent 600M	 Descent 840M	 Time 7 hrs trekking	 Distance 20KM
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DAY 25

Trek through Gamgadhi (2200m) to Talcha Airport (2750m).

We'll have an early start on this final day of trekking and aim to reach the busy little town of Gamgadhi in time for lunch at a lodge. After lunch, there's a steady climb up to the airfield at Talcha where we set up our final camp. There are few facilities here, but there is a good view north-eastwards to the peaks above Mugu.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Camping	 Ascent 1040M	 Descent 300M	 Time 7 hrs trekking	 Distance 15KM
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DAY 26

Fly via Nepalgunj to Kathmandu.

The early morning flight takes us out of the cool, fresh mountains of Dolpo and into the hot and humid Terai region at Nepalgunj. This time, however, it is a short stop and we soon connect with our flight to Kathmandu, where we check into our hotel. Time now for a clean up and a look in the mirror (if you

dare). This evening we have to get used to some fine dining and the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu's busy streets.

Meals: **B L D**

**Accommodation**

Hotel with swimming pool

DAY 27**A free day in Kathmandu which can also be used as contingency.**

This is a contingency day in case of problems with the weather-dependent flight out of Talcha. If we have flown on schedule this will be a day to relax and enjoy the delights of Kathmandu. In the morning there is an optional complimentary guided sightseeing tour of the city's main attractions. Alternatively, you may prefer to do your own thing, especially if you have visited Kathmandu before. One of the attractions of any visit to Nepal is the chance to walk the streets of Kathmandu, which presents a fascinating mosaic of shops, cafes and restaurants, food markets and street vendors, as well as a bewildering array of colourful temples and shrines. This evening we will have an end of trip dinner in one of the city's finest restaurants.

Meals: **B L D**

**Accommodation**

Hotel with swimming pool

DAY 28**Your holiday ends after breakfast. Transfers to Kathmandu Airport are provided.**

Your holiday ends after breakfast. Transfers to Kathmandu Airport are provided. To extend your holiday in Nepal, why not pre-book a day's sightseeing tour in the Kathmandu Valley, or a multi-day excursion to the wildlife reserve at Chitwan. Contact our office for details.

Meals: **B**

Extensions

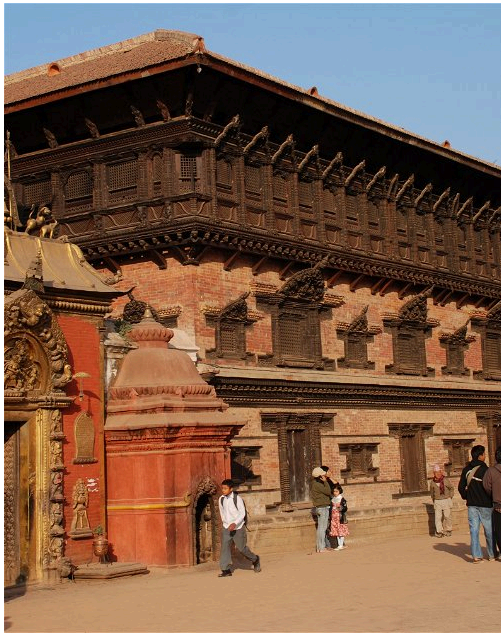
When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Chitwan Jungle Extension

The jungles of southern Nepal are an interesting counterpoint to trekking in the foothills or the high Himalaya. Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides a relaxing and comfortable base for a wildlife safari and cultural village experience. During two days of wildlife viewing in the Chitwan National Park 'buffer zone' - the interface area between visitors and the animals that live at Chitwan - you will be accompanied by expert guides on safaris by jeep by boat and on foot.

3 days from
US\$1,545 per person



Kathmandu Tour - Nagarkot and Bhaktapur

The Kathmandu Valley contains the cities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself, all of which were once independent kingdoms. An exploration of the valley's historic and cultural sights is an excellent way to begin or end your adventure in Nepal. Highlights of this tour includes a very early drive up to Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim, the perfect place to watch a Himalayan sunrise. This is followed by a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, renowned for its temples and traditional buildings.

1 day from
US\$175 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified Nepalese tour leader
- Kathmandu Airport transfers
- Internal flights and land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- Restricted area permits
- Full trekking service including all equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- Guided sightseeing tour of Kathmandu
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Nepalese Visa
- Tips for porters and other trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 28.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Our camping holidays in Nepal are accompanied by an experienced and well trained trek cook and his team of assistants. Breakfasts will include porridge or cereals and sometimes eggs, with tea, coffee and hot chocolate. Lunches are generally prepared on the trail and can include cooked or tinned vegetables, rice, chips, freshly made Tibetan bread, as well as tinned tuna, meats or cheese. On occasion this can be augmented by noodle soup. Dinners always start off with soup, followed by a locally inspired main course such as rice, dal and spicy vegetables, or a more international dish like pasta with a tomato sauce or pizza and chips. Dessert can be tinned fruit with custard or rice pudding or cake with custard. The emphasis is on providing a high-carbohydrate and largely vegetarian diet, which we have found to be easily digestible at high altitude. During this trek there will be very few opportunities to purchase snacks and drinks from simple shops and tea houses. All meals while on trek and also while staying in hotels in Kathmandu and in Nepalgunj are included in the trip price.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 3 nights in Kathmandu at an excellent and centrally-located hotel such as the Shanker. There is also a single night at a basic but comfortable hotel in Nepalgunj. Whilst on trek there are 23 nights full-service camping. This is camping in some style, where we provide spacious 2 person tents (foam mattresses are also provided), a dining tent complete with table and chairs where you will eat your meals and relax, a kitchen tent in which the cook crew produce your meals and one (or more usually two) toilet tents. Please note that due to the nature of the terrain, there are likely to be one or two less than ideal camping places where we can set up only a restricted camp. Your local crew will set up the camp each evening and take it down again in the morning. You will be served with a cup of `bed-tea` each morning and provided with a bowl of water with which to wash. Water for hand washing is also provided at each meal. On arrival into camp each afternoon hot drinks and snacks will be provided in the dining tent. All accommodation is arranged on a twin sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. It is possible to hire a single tent while on trek for an additional cost. Please note single tent hire does not include single rooms in hotels. For the 4 hotel nights single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. Additional hotel nights in Kathmandu can also be pre-booked.

Internal flights

Access to the high and remote areas of the Himalaya where our treks start is often only possible using internal flights. The changeable nature of mountain weather makes flying conditions complex. In addition, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal does not operate to the same standards as those of western nations and all airlines in Nepal appear on the UK Air Safety List (ASL), and are banned from operating commercial air services to, from, and within the United Kingdom. Flying in Nepal is an acknowledged risk, and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice provides further details which you can read on their [website](#). KE is mindful of its duty of care to clients travelling with us in Nepal and we are stakeholders in an annual independent air audit of Nepal airlines undertaken by UK tour operators, most recently undertaken in February 2024. KE uses 5 airlines in Nepal which have been approved by this audit. These airlines are: Buddha Air, Summit Airlines, Shree, Tara and Yeti. We continue to cooperate with other tour operators to monitor aviation safety in Nepal and will ensure we remain a stakeholder in any further air safety audits. While we have taken appropriate action to try to minimise the risks of flying in Nepal, you should be aware that flying in mountainous terrain is not without any risk.

Please note that poor weather can cause delays on internal flights. If at the start of your holiday internal flights are cancelled for the day, you will spend an extra night near the airport (this may be at a hotel other than the group hotel). On the majority of trips there is enough flexibility in the trekking itinerary to make up 1 or possibly 2 lost days, but an alternative trek will be provided if delays to internal flights mean the original itinerary (or a shortened version of it) is no longer feasible.

For trips that end with an internal flight out of the mountains with no alternative road access, we have included 2 nights in Kathmandu as a contingency against delay. In the extremely unlikely event that a delay to your internal flight causes you to miss your homeward international flight, KE will re-book international flights for Flight Inclusive clients, but please be aware that clients booking on a Land Only basis will be responsible for re-booking their onward travel and for any associated costs. We advise you to take out suitable travel insurance and to keep your receipts, as you may subsequently be able to make a claim.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified Nepalese tour leader, assisted by an experienced team including Sherpa guides and porters.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £200 to £250 (or equivalent in US dollars, Euros etc.) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including porter and trek crew tips, beer, soft drinks etc. It is not necessary to obtain local currency prior to departure. Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are equally acceptable for exchange in Nepal. Please note: Scottish and Northern Ireland bank notes are not accepted in Nepal. We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of cash, since you will exchange the majority of this on the day of your arrival in Kathmandu. If you prefer not to carry all of your spending money in cash, it is possible to withdraw money from ATMs in Kathmandu using your debit or credit card. During the trek there will be very few (if any) opportunities to buy snacks, chocolate, soft drinks and beer from tea-shops. Please be aware that since everything has to be carried up, these items become more expensive as you gain altitude.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service. Normally the tips are given at the end of the trek and this is best done as a group. Your Nepali tour leader will advise the group on an appropriate level of tipping. Most groups will hand out the tips with a bit of ceremony (or sometimes a party) on the last evening, to mark the end of the holiday. As a guide, we recommend that each group member contributes around £120 (in rupees) to these tips. At the end of their trek many people also like to donate various items of equipment to the porters and trek staff who work so hard to make the trip a success. Boots, gloves, hats, scarves and even socks are always warmly received by the porters, whilst technical clothing and equipment such as head-torches and trekking poles is highly prized by the Sherpa team. Your tour leader will make arrangements for a fair distribution (possibly by raffle) amongst the trek crew. Please note that you will have the opportunity to tip your tour leader separately (and additionally) during dinner on the final evening of the holiday.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

Your main item of luggage should be a sturdy kit bag, duffle bag or similar. This will be carried during the trek by porters or pack animals and must weigh no more than 15kg. If you are picking up a sleeping bag and down jacket from KE in Kathmandu, you need to factor in the weight of these items (around 3kg) and allow space in your bag for them. You should also take on your holiday a daypack of approximately 30 litres capacity. For all flights to and from STOL airstrips in Nepal the maximum allowance for hold baggage AND hand baggage combined is 15kg and you should make every effort to keep to this total weight. It is usually not a problem to check in a couple of kg more than this, but you may be required to pay a small excess luggage charge. It is possible to leave items not required on trek at the hotel in Kathmandu. For your international flights, please check the baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Visa Nepal

All nationalities require a visa. The visa process is partly automated and the fee is \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, \$125 for 90 days. The visa is FREE for children under 10 years. The visa allows multiple re-entry. Payment must be made in cash and USD, GBP or Euros are accepted.

Part of this on-arrival visa process involves filling in a 'Tourist Visa Application Form' and you can simplify the procedure at Kathmandu Airport by filling this form in online (**within 15 days of travelling**) at [this link](#). This generates a receipt which you present (hard copy or saved on your phone) on arrival. This should allow you to go straight to the cashier to pay for your visa and has the potential to save you time in the visa queue.

Whilst these are not now needed for the visa process, we recommend that you travel with at least 2 spare passport photographs.

Trekking Permits - what do we need from you ?

Mount Everest Marathon (MEM). Everest Monasteries Trek (EVP). Ganesh Himal Panorama Trek (GHP). Lamjung Himal Trek (LHT). Middle Hills Arun River to Dudh Kosi (MHT). Shey Gumpa and Inner Dolpo (DOL). Dolpo to Mugu Trek (DTM). Around Manaslu Trek (MAN).

For each of these holidays, we need your passport details and we need to send through to Nepal ahead of your departure a scan of the information pages of your passport and a scan of a passport-style photograph of yourself. Please send these scans to us once your holiday is guaranteed.

In addition, for Conservation Area treks and other treks requiring Special Permits - DOL, DTM, MAN - you will be required on arrival in Kathmandu to provide your passport (with your visa) for presentation at the Nepal Tourism Board. Your passport will be returned to you by your tour leader at dinner.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Currency

The unit of currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. For this trip you need to be aerobically fit and also comfortable with walking up to 7 or 8 hours each day with ascents and/or descents of up to 1000 metres on most days. You should adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Regular hiking in hill country is the best training but running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

Mid October to mid November is the best season for visiting Dolpo, between the end of the monsoon and the colder and potentially snowy onset of winter. During this trip we are likely to encounter a wide range of daytime temperatures. At the start of the trek, at relatively low level, it is likely to be warm during the day, possibly above 20 degrees centigrade. Higher up, it will be cooler. Above 4000 metres the maximum daytime temperature will be just 10 or 12 degrees centigrade, although it can feel warmer than that in the sun. When the sun goes down, the temperatures fall rapidly and the night-time temperatures at our highest camps will be well below freezing. This region, north of the main chain of the Himalaya, usually sees little in the way of precipitation at this season, but it should be remembered that in mountains, localised storms do occur and the possibility of rain or snow cannot be ruled out.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Trekking and Climbing in Nepal. Steve Razzetti.
- Lonely Planet. Nepal. Lonely Planet.
- Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya.
- The Rough Guide to Nepal.
- Caravans of the Himalaya. Eric Valli.
- The Snow Leopard. Peter Matthiessen.

Maps

Rara, Jumla and Mugu 1:100,000. Newgrove Consultants (Available Stanfords)

Rara, Jumla and Mugu region in the Newgrove Consultants' series covering the course of Great Himalaya Trail High Route. Printed on light, waterproof and tear-resistant plastic paper. The map is double-sided and covers the High Route between Malchham north of the Rara Lake and the Rara National Park and Crystal Mountain in the Shey-Phoksundo National Park.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. The packed weight of your kit bag while trekking should be no more than 15 kgs.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Sandals or similar for river crossings
- Gaiters
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Baselayer shirts
- Baselayer leggings
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Warm jacket (down)*
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Warm and waterproof gloves or mittens
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x 2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep your kit bag contents dry)
- Daypack approximately 30 litres
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -10°C)*
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).
- Small padlock (to lock your kit bag)

The following items are optional:

- **Thermarest or similar camping mat
- Trainers or similar for camp use
- Shorts
- Sleeping bag liner
- Swimwear
- Trekking poles (strongly recommended)
- Microspikes (Kahtoola) or similar footwear traction (see notes)
- Camera

- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

*FREE sleeping bag and down jacket hire is included in your KE holiday booking on request. Please make all requests at least 4 weeks prior to the trip departure date. Please note all hire / rental equipment is issued in Kathmandu. Please remember to allow room in your kit bag for these items.

**Foam mattresses are provided. Taking an additional Thermarest or similar mattress is optional.

Trekking Poles and Instep Crampons. For this trip you should take a pair of trekking poles, even if you only use them as a safety measure when crossing snow-covered high ground. In certain conditions, the trip leader may also issue Grivel Spider 'instep' crampons to group members for these conditions. These are small lightweight crampons, which can quickly and easily be attached to any kind of walking boot. If you have brought your own footwear traction such as the excellent Kahtoola Microspikes you can use these instead.

The Nepalese are still traditional and conservative in the way they dress. Therefore to avoid embarrassment on both sides we recommend that you respect this and do not wear revealing clothing or sleeveless tops while visiting Nepal. Shorts are acceptable, but they should reach to just above the knee and be modest and for women it is preferable to wear trousers or a trekking skirt.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kathmandu. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving mid-afternoon on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Kathmandu usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Pioneering Treks This route from Dolpo to Mugu is one of the great trekking challenges of west Nepal and has been on our radar for many years. Having run the trip very successfully in 2023, we would recommend this trek for any of our committed Nepal aficionados.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 20/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change