

Upper Mustang Trek



The Upper Mustang Trek is one of Nepal's most extraordinary and culturally immersive trekking adventures, often described as a journey to the "Last Forbidden Kingdom." Situated in the trans-Himalayan region of northwestern Nepal, Upper Mustang is a remote and spiritually rich destination that has preserved its ancient traditions and Tibetan-influenced heritage for centuries.

For travelers seeking an off-the-beaten-path Himalayan adventure, the Upper Mustang Trek promises breathtaking scenery, rich cultural encounters, and a rare glimpse into one of the world's most preserved Himalayan civilizations — making it a truly once-in-a-lifetime journey for both cultural explorers and nature enthusiasts.

Where is Upper Mustang Trek?

The Upper Mustang Trek is located in the northern part of the Mustang District in Gandaki Province, Nepal, bordering Tibet (China). Geographically, it lies in the trans-Himalayan region, north of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri mountain ranges, making it one of Nepal's most remote and arid trekking destinations. To reach Upper Mustang, trekkers usually take a short flight from Pokhara to Jomsom and then begin their journey northward through Kagbeni.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu

Welcome to Nepal! Upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport, make your way to your hotel in Kathmandu (self-transfer). In the evening 5 PM, join us at the Hawk's Eye Travels office for a short pre-trek briefing to go over the itinerary, permits and any final preparations for your upcoming adventure.

Day 2: Explore Kathmandu (1,400 m)

Spend the day discovering Kathmandu's vibrant cultural and historical landmarks. Visit Kathmandu Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, home to ancient palaces, temples, and traditional architecture. Explore Swayambhunath (Monkey Temple), perched on a hill with panoramic views of the Kathmandu Valley, and witness Buddhist rituals at Pashupatinath Temple, one of Nepal's most sacred Hindu sites. Use this day to prepare for your trek by shopping for any last-minute gear, trekking essentials, or local handicrafts.

Day 3: Drive from Kathmandu to Pokhara (Approx. 6-8 hours, 820 m)

Today, embark on a scenic drive from Kathmandu to Pokhara along the famous Prithvi Highway, which winds through lush hills, terraced farmlands, rivers, and picturesque towns. Arrive in Pokhara, the gateway to the Annapurna and Mustang regions, and check into your hotel. Spend the evening exploring the Phewa Lake area, relaxing by the lakeside, or strolling through the local markets.



Day 4: Fly Pokhara to Jomsom and Trek to Kagbeni (2,810 m)

Take a scenic domestic flight from Pokhara to Jomsom, flying over the majestic Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges. Upon arrival in Jomsom, begin your trek along the Kali Gandaki River, passing through arid valleys and traditional villages. Reach Kagbeni, the official gateway to Upper Mustang, known for its ancient monasteries, mud-brick houses, and narrow cobbled streets. Explore the village, interact with the locals, and take in the unique Tibetan-influenced architecture and culture. Overnight stay in a local teahouse, preparing for the trek deeper into Mustang.

Day 5: Trek from Kagbeni to Chele (3,050 m)

Start trekking from Kagbeni into the arid, trans-Himalayan landscapes of Upper Mustang. The trail passes barren cliffs, narrow gorges, and traditional villages, with numerous mani walls and prayer flags reflecting the region's deep Buddhist heritage. Arrive at Chele, a serene village offering teahouse accommodation with warm hospitality. Enjoy spectacular views of snow-capped peaks and the surrounding desert-like terrain. Take time to rest and soak in the tranquil atmosphere before continuing deeper into Mustang the next day.

Day 6: Trek from Chele to Syangboche (3,475 m)

Today, the trail gradually ascends from Chele to Syangboche, offering trekkers stunning views of desert-like cliffs, narrow canyons, and high passes. The landscape is unique to the trans-Himalayan region, with sparse vegetation and occasional sightings of Himalayan wildlife. Along the way, stop at small monasteries and prayer sites, gaining insight into the local Buddhist culture. Arrive at Syangboche, a quiet village perfect for an overnight stay in a teahouse, where you can enjoy a warm meal and prepare for the next day's trek toward Ghami.

Day 7: Trek from Syangboche to Ghami (3,520 m)

Trek through open valleys and rocky terrain as you make your way to Ghami, one of the largest and most picturesque villages in Upper Mustang. Along the trail, admire traditional Tibetan-style architecture, mani walls, and cultivated farms, reflecting the region's rich cultural heritage. This day provides excellent opportunities for photography and cultural immersion, allowing you to capture the unique landscapes, village life, and spiritual atmosphere of Mustang. Overnight stay in a local teahouse in Ghami.

Day 8: Trek from Ghami to Chharang (3,560 m)

Continue trekking through high desert landscapes of Upper Mustang, with panoramic views of surrounding mountains and cliffs. The trail passes by local monasteries and ancient cave complexes, offering insight into Mustang's deep spiritual and cultural heritage. Arrive at Chharang, a charming village known for its traditional architecture and serene atmosphere. Overnight stay in a local teahouse, enjoying warm hospitality and preparing for the next day's journey toward Lo Manthang.

Day 9: Trek from Chharang to Lo Manthang (3,810 m)

Today, trek toward Lo Manthang, the walled capital of the former Kingdom of Lo, reaching an altitude of 3,810 meters. The trail offers breathtaking views of cliffs, desert valleys, and distant snow-capped peaks. Upon arrival, explore the royal palace, ancient monasteries, and narrow cobbled streets of Lo Manthang. Immerse yourself in the timeless Tibetan culture, observe local traditions, and enjoy the unique atmosphere of this historically preserved town. Overnight stay in a local teahouse.

Day 10: Explore Lo Manthang (3,810 m)

Spend a full day exploring Lo Manthang and its surrounding villages, including Chhoser, known for its ancient caves and religious sites. Visit historic monasteries, royal palaces, and local markets, where you can interact with the friendly Mustangi people and learn about their traditional lifestyle and customs. Experience the rich Tibetan Buddhist heritage, observe prayer rituals, and enjoy the warm hospitality of the locals. This day provides an immersive cultural experience and plenty of opportunities for photography and sightseeing in the heart of Upper Mustang.

Day 11: Trek from Lo Manthang to Drakmar (3,610 m)

Begin the return journey from Lo Manthang, trekking through remote landscapes, high passes, and open valleys. The trail offers continued views of barren cliffs, desert-like terrain, and distant peaks. Arrive at Drakmar, a small and peaceful village, perfect for an overnight stay. Take in the serene surroundings, enjoy the tranquil desert valleys, and rest in a local teahouse while reflecting on your cultural and scenic experiences in Upper Mustang.



Day 12: Trek from Drakmar to Ghiling (3,300 m)

Descend gradually from Drakmar toward Ghiling, passing ancient chortens, mani walls, and small monasteries that highlight the region's deep Buddhist heritage. The trail winds through desert valleys and traditional villages, offering scenic views and opportunities to interact with locals. Overnight stay in a local lodge in Ghiling, where you can enjoy a traditional Mustangi meal and experience the warmth and hospitality of the village community.

Day 13: Trek from Ghiling to Chusang (2,900 m)

Continue trekking through narrow valleys and arid landscapes, following the trail along the Kali Gandaki Gorge. Enjoy views of the rugged cliffs, desert plains, and the river carving its path through the mountains. Arrive at Chusang, a village renowned for its ancient caves and striking rock formations, offering a unique cultural and geological experience. Overnight stay in a local teahouse, resting before the final trek to Jomsom.

Day 14: Trek from Chusang to Jomsom (2,700 m)

Complete the trekking section as you descend from Chusang to Jomsom, a bustling town and administrative center of the Mustang region. The trail passes through open valleys and traditional villages, offering scenic views of the surrounding cliffs and riverbanks. Upon arrival in Jomsom, relax at your teahouse or lodge and explore the local bazaar, where you can shop for souvenirs, interact with locals, and enjoy the town's vibrant atmosphere. Prepare for your flight back to Pokhara the following day.

Day 15: Fly Jomsom to Pokhara (820 m)

Take a short domestic flight from Jomsom to Pokhara, enjoying aerial views of the Himalayan peaks and Mustang landscapes one last time. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and unwind after the trek. Spend the evening exploring Phewa Lake, enjoy a boat ride, or stroll along the lakeside promenade lined with cafes and shops. This is a perfect time to relax, reflect on your trek, and soak in the serene beauty of Pokhara.



Day 16: Explore Pokhara (820 m)

Spend a full day discovering Pokhara's natural beauty and cultural attractions. Visit Devi's Fall, a stunning waterfall with an underground cascade, and explore the nearby Gupteshwor Cave, known for its sacred shrine and fascinating rock formations. Take a serene boat ride on Phewa Lake, enjoying reflections of the Machhapuchhre (Fishtail) Mountain, or visit the World Peace Pagoda, perched on a hill with panoramic views of the valley and Himalayas.

Day 17: Drive Back to Kathmandu (Approx. 6-8 hours, 1,400 m)

Drive from Pokhara to Kathmandu along the scenic Prithvi Highway, passing lush hills, rivers, and charming towns. Enjoy the changing landscapes one last time, capturing any final photographs of the Nepali countryside. Arrive in Kathmandu, check into your hotel, and take time to rest or do last-minute shopping. This marks the conclusion of your Upper Mustang Trek, leaving you with lasting memories of the Himalayan landscapes, Tibetan culture, and unforgettable adventure.

Inclusions:

- Accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara as per the itinerary
- All necessary trekking permits, including the Restricted Area Permit (Upper Mustang) and Annapurna Conservation Area Permit (ACAP)
- Domestic flight from Pokhara to Jomsom and return (or by private/shared jeep as per itinerary)
- Airport transfers in both Kathmandu and Pokhara
- Accommodation during the trek in comfortable and clean local lodges or teahouses
- Experienced, licensed trekking guide and necessary support staff/porters
- All ground transportation as mentioned in the itinerary (private or tourist vehicle)
- All applicable government taxes and service charges
- First aid kit and essential safety equipment carried by the trekking guide



Exclusions:

- International flights to and from Nepal
- Nepal visa fee (available on arrival at Kathmandu airport)
- Travel and medical insurance (mandatory for all trekkers)
- Personal trekking gear and equipment
- Meals and accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara (unless specified)
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and bottled water during the trek
- Tips for guides, porters, and drivers (optional but appreciated)
- Extra expenses due to unforeseen events (flight delays, bad weather, or personal reasons)
- Additional activities or sightseeing not mentioned in the itinerary



Best time for the Upper Mustang Trek

The best time for the Upper Mustang Trek is from March to November, as the region lies in the rain shadow of the Himalayas, making it one of the few treks in Nepal that can be done even during the monsoon season.

Spring (March to May):

This is one of the most beautiful times to trek. The weather is stable, skies are clear, and the temperature is pleasant. The landscapes are vibrant, and trekkers can witness the colorful Tiji Festival in Lo Manthang, usually held in May, showcasing Mustang's rich cultural heritage.

Autumn (September to November):

Another ideal season with crystal-clear mountain views, mild temperatures, and comfortable trekking conditions. The trails are dry and the visibility excellent, offering breathtaking views of Nilgiri, Annapurna, and Dhaulagiri ranges.



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