

UPPER DOLPO TREK



The Upper Dolpo Trek is one of Nepal's most remote and pristine trekking destinations, offering adventurers an extraordinary journey into the heart of the high Himalayas. Trekkers exploring Upper Dolpo will experience vast alpine deserts, crystal-clear turquoise lakes, sacred monasteries and the dramatic terrain of the Shey Phoksundo National Park.

One of the trek's most iconic highlights is Phoksundo Lake, Nepal's deepest and most spectacular high-altitude lake, surrounded by cliffs and lush forests. Along the route, travelers encounter traditional Tibetan villages such as Ringmo, Chharka, and Dunai, where centuries-old customs, prayer flags, and ancient monasteries reflect the region's rich Buddhist heritage. The journey also offers a chance to cross challenging high passes like Kanji La (5,280 m), providing panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, deep gorges, and vast valleys.

Trek Highlights:

- Shey Phoksundo National Park: Discover pristine wilderness and rare wildlife like snow leopards and Himalayan blue sheep.
- Phoksundo Lake: Visit Nepal's deepest turquoise lake, surrounded by cliffs and sacred landscapes.
- Tibetan Buddhist Culture: Explore remote villages, ancient monasteries, and traditional Tibetan lifestyles.
- High-Altitude Adventure: Cross passes like Kanji La (5,280 m) with breathtaking Himalayan views.
- Remote Villages & Lifestyle: Experience authentic mountain life in untouched settlements.

Where is Upper Dolpo Trek?

The Upper Dolpo Trek is located in the northwestern region of Nepal, within the Dolpa District of Karnali Province. It lies in a remote trans-Himalayan zone bordering Tibet (China) and is protected under the Shey Phoksundo National Park, Nepal's largest national park. This isolated region sits behind the Dhaulagiri and Kanjirowa mountain ranges, creating a dry, high-altitude desert similar to the Tibetan Plateau. The main entry point for the trek is Juphal, accessible by a short flight from Nepalgunj. Upper Dolpo is famous for its ancient Tibetan Buddhist culture, dramatic landscapes, deep valleys, and sacred sites like Phoksundo Lake and Shey Gumpa. Due to its restricted status, trekkers require special permits to visit this culturally rich and naturally stunning region.

Detail 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

Spend the day discovering the rich cultural and historical heritage of Kathmandu. Visit iconic sites such as Kathmandu Durbar Square, the sacred Pashupatinath Temple, and the majestic Boudhanath Stupa. This day also includes a final trek briefing and preparation, ensuring you are ready for your adventure into the remote Upper Dolpo region.

Day 3: Kathmandu - Nepalgunj (Flight)

After breakfast, board a domestic flight from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj, a bustling city in western Nepal that serves as the primary gateway to the remote Dolpo region. The flight offers scenic views of the Himalayan foothills and Terai plains, providing a glimpse of Nepal's diverse landscapes. Upon arrival in Nepalgunj, you will be transferred to your hotel for check-in and relaxation. Nepalgunj, with its vibrant markets and local culture, gives trekkers a brief taste of western Nepal life before entering the untouched landscapes of Upper Dolpo. Early arrival allows you to adjust to the change in altitude and climate in preparation for the trek.

Day 4: Nepalgunj - Juphal - Chhepka (2,678m, Trek)

After an early breakfast, take a short domestic flight from Nepalgunj to Juphal (2,353m), the main gateway to Upper Dolpo. The flight offers breathtaking aerial views of the remote western Himalayas, rolling hills, and river valleys as you approach the mountainous terrain. Upon arrival at Juphal, meet your trekking guide and support team, and begin the first day of trekking toward Chhepka (2,678m). Trekking to Chhepka is a gentle introduction to high-altitude hiking, allowing your body to start adjusting to the elevation.



Day 5: Chhepka - Chunuwar (3,130m, 6-7 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Chhepka, continue your trek toward Chunuwar (3,130m), navigating through rugged Himalayan terrain. The trail gradually ascends, offering trekkers a chance to acclimatize while enjoying the pristine natural surroundings. Along the way, you will pass remote villages and traditional settlements, where locals maintain their ancient lifestyle, practice subsistence farming, and uphold Tibetan Buddhist customs. Stone houses, mani walls, and prayer flags enrich the cultural experience during the trek. Arrive in Chunuwar by late afternoon.

Day 6: Chunuwar - Ringmo (3,641m, 4 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Chunuwar, continue trekking toward Ringmo (3,641m), a picturesque village located on the edge of the stunning Phoksundo Lake. The trail gradually ascends through high-altitude valleys, scattered forests, and traditional Dolpo settlements, offering both natural beauty and cultural insight. Arrive in Ringmo by early afternoon, giving you time to explore the village and lakeshore, capture photographs, and experience the tranquil highland environment.



Day 7: Rest Day - Explore Phoksundo Lake

Today is a rest and acclimatization day at Ringmo, giving trekkers time to adjust to the high altitude and enjoy one of the most breathtaking natural wonders of Nepal. This day also allows for rest, stretching, and preparation for the challenging high-altitude trekking ahead. Your guide may conduct a briefing on safety, acclimatization, and trekking tips for the upcoming passes and remote sections of Upper Dolpo. Spending a day here provides both physical recovery and cultural immersion, making it one of the most memorable highlights of the Upper Dolpo Trek.

Day 8: Ringmo - Lake Side Camp (3,630m, 5 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Ringmo, begin trekking along the scenic shoreline of Phoksundo Lake, surrounded by towering cliffs and snow-capped peaks. The trail is relatively gentle, offering a perfect opportunity to enjoy the tranquil natural beauty of this remote region. Arrive at Lake Side Camp (3,630m) by early afternoon. Enjoy a warm meal prepared by your trekking cook, relax, and soak in the serenity of one of Nepal's most beautiful high-altitude lakes. This day combines gentle trekking, cultural insights, and spectacular natural scenery, allowing trekkers to gradually acclimatize as they prepare for the more challenging high-altitude sections ahead.

Day 9: Lake Side Camp - Tuk Kyakas Khola Camp (4,600m, 7 hrs Trek)

After an early breakfast at Lake Side Camp, begin the challenging ascent toward Tuk Kyakas Khola Camp (4,600m). Today's trek takes you through high-altitude alpine landscapes, where the terrain becomes more rugged and the air thinner, making acclimatization crucial. The trail passes through barren valleys, rocky ridges, and scattered villages, providing glimpses of the traditional Dolpo lifestyle. Trekkers are rewarded with panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, deep gorges, and pristine highland wilderness. Arrive at Tuk Kyakas Khola Camp by late afternoon.

Day 10: Tuk Kyakas Khola - Nagdola La Pass (5,350m)-Shey Gompa (4,343m, 7 hrs Trek)

After breakfast at Tuk Kyakas Khola Camp, embark on one of the most challenging and rewarding days of the Upper Dolpo Trek—crossing the Nagdola La Pass (5,350m). After reaching the summit, enjoy a well-deserved sense of accomplishment and take in the breathtaking vistas of Upper Dolpo's remote wilderness. Carefully descend to Shey Gompa (4,343m), one of the region's most sacred Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, perched high above the valley. Shey Gompa is a spiritual and cultural highlight of the trek, offering trekkers a chance to explore ancient Buddhist architecture, interact with monks, and witness traditional rituals.

Day 11: Explore Shey Gompa

Today is dedicated to exploring Shey Gompa, one of the most sacred and remote monasteries in Upper Dolpo. Perched high above the valley, Shey Gompa offers trekkers a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in Tibetan Buddhist culture and spiritual traditions that have been preserved for centuries. Spend the day visiting the monastery, observing prayer rituals, and interacting with resident monks. Trekkers can also walk around the surrounding areas, enjoying panoramic views of pristine valleys, prayer flags, and snow-capped peaks.

Day 12: Shey Gompa - Sela La Pass (5,095m) - Namgung (4,400m, 7 hrs Trek)

After an early breakfast at Shey Gompa, embark on today's high-altitude trek to Namgung, crossing the Sela La Pass (5,095m). The trail climbs gradually through rocky terrain and scattered prayer flags, offering trekkers a chance to acclimatize while enjoying the breathtaking vistas. After reaching the summit of Sela La Pass, take time to admire the 360-degree views and capture photographs of the dramatic landscape. From the pass, begin the descent toward Namgung (4,400m), a remote village known for its traditional Tibetan Buddhist culture and stone-built houses.



Day 13: Namgung - Saldang (3,800m, 4 hrs Trek)

After breakfast at Namgung, continue trekking toward Saldang (3,800m), one of Upper Dolpo's most historic and culturally significant villages. The trail descends gradually, passing through high-altitude valleys, rocky terrain, and small settlements, offering trekkers a chance to observe traditional Tibetan-influenced lifestyles. Saldang is an important cultural hub, known for its stone houses, mani walls, monasteries, and local markets. Along the way, trekkers can interact with locals, learn about their customs, and witness daily life in this isolated region. Arrive in Saldang by early afternoon and settle in at a tea house or guesthouse, enjoying a warm meal and rest.

Day 14: Saldang - Sibu (4,200m, 5 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Saldang, begin the ascent toward Sibu (4,200m), trekking through remote villages, high-altitude valleys, and open alpine landscapes. The trail offers stunning views of snow-capped peaks, rugged cliffs, and expansive Dolpo wilderness, providing trekkers with an immersive Himalayan experience. Along the way, observe the traditional lifestyle of Upper Dolpo communities, including stone houses, prayer flags, and mani walls. Arrive in Sibu by early afternoon and settle into a tea house or tent camp, where you can enjoy a hot meal and rest.

Day 15: Sibu-Syanta La Base Camp (4,600m, 5 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Sibu, begin trekking toward Syanta La Base Camp (4,600m), the starting point for the challenging Syanta La Pass. Today's trek involves a gradual ascent through high-altitude valleys, rocky terrain, and scattered settlements, offering panoramic views of snow-capped peaks and pristine alpine landscapes. Along the trail, trekkers can observe the unique flora and fauna of Upper Dolpo, including alpine wildflowers, Himalayan birds, and grazing yaks. Arrive at Syanta La Base Camp by early afternoon and set up tents provided by the trekking team. This day combines adventure, acclimatization, and breathtaking natural beauty, making it an essential stage of the Upper Dolpo Trek.

Day 16: Syanta La Base Camp - Syanta La Pass (5,220m) - Tokyu (4,240m, 7-8 hrs Trek)

After an early breakfast at Syanta La Base Camp, embark on the challenging ascent to Syanta La Pass (5,220m), one of the highest and most dramatic points of the Upper Dolpo Trek. After reaching the summit, pause to take in the breathtaking 360-degree views and capture photographs of the dramatic terrain. Begin the descent to Tokyu (4,240m), following a trail that passes through alpine meadows, scattered prayer flags, and small settlements.

Day 17: Tokyu - Sisual (3,750m, 6 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Tokyu, continue trekking through picturesque alpine valleys and remote Dolpo villages, gradually descending to Sisual (3,750m). Along the way, trekkers can observe the traditional lifestyle of the Dolpo people, including stone-built houses, prayer flags, mani walls, and small monasteries. The route also showcases stunning natural landscapes, with distant snow-capped peaks, grazing yaks, and Himalayan birds adding to the high-altitude experience. Arrive in Sisual by early afternoon and settle in at a tea house or tent camp, enjoying a warm meal and rest. This day allows for gradual descent and acclimatization, helping trekkers recover while still enjoying the remote beauty and cultural richness of Upper Dolpo.

Day 18: Sisual-Laina (3,370m, 7-8 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Sisual, continue trekking through the remote highlands of Upper Dolpo, passing traditional villages, open valleys, and rugged terrain. The trail offers a combination of gradual descents and scenic landscapes, allowing trekkers to enjoy the serenity of this isolated region while steadily making their way toward Laina. Along the route, observe the unique culture of Upper Dolpo communities, including stone houses, prayer flags, and mani walls, as well as local agricultural practices.. Arrive in Laina (3,370m) by late afternoon and settle into a tea house or tent camp. This day combines cultural immersion, breathtaking scenery, and gentle trekking, preparing trekkers for the next stage toward Lingdo and eventually the lower-altitude sections of the trek.

Day 19: Laina-Lingdo (5-6 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Laina, continue trekking toward Lingdo, passing through pristine wilderness, open valleys, and scattered remote settlements. The trail offers trekkers a chance to experience the untouched beauty of Upper Dolpo, with panoramic views of surrounding Himalayan peaks, high-altitude meadows, and rugged terrain. Along the way, observe the traditional lifestyle of Dolpo villagers, including stone-built houses, prayer flags, and small monasteries. Trekkers may also spot local wildlife such as Himalayan birds, yaks, and wild goats, enhancing the experience of this remote Himalayan region. Arrive in Lingdo by early afternoon and settle into a tea house or tent camp, enjoying a warm meal and rest. This day provides a balance of adventure, cultural exposure, and scenic trekking, preparing trekkers for the gradual descent toward Dunai and the completion of the Upper Dolpo circuit.

Day 20: Lingdo-Dunai (2,140m, 5 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Lingdo, begin the descent toward Dunai (2,140m), a small town that serves as the administrative center at the base of Upper Dolpo. The trail gradually descends through scenic valleys, terraced fields, and forests, providing a gentler trekking day after several high-altitude days. Along the way, trekkers can observe local villages, stone-built houses, and daily life in this remote region, gaining insight into the unique culture and traditions of Dolpo communities. Arrive in Dunai by early afternoon and check into a tea house or lodge. Enjoy a warm meal and rest, reflecting on the incredible journey through Upper Dolpo's remote wilderness. Dunai also provides an opportunity to reconnect with modern amenities after days in isolated high-altitude areas.

Day 21. Dunai-Juphal (2,435m, 4 hrs Trek)

After breakfast in Dunai, embark on the final trekking segment toward Juphal (2,435m), completing the Upper Dolpo circuit. The trail descends and winds through forested valleys, terraced fields, and small settlements, offering a peaceful end to the high-altitude adventure. Along the way, trekkers can reflect on their journey through remote villages, pristine alpine landscapes, and cultural landmarks encountered over the past weeks. Arrive in Juphal by early afternoon and settle into a tea house or lodge, enjoying a well-deserved rest and warm meal. Celebrate the completion of this remarkable trek, taking in the mountain vistas and tranquil environment one last time before returning to lower elevations. This day marks the successful completion of the Upper Dolpo Trek, combining gentle trekking, scenic landscapes, and a sense of accomplishment after exploring one of Nepal's most remote and unspoiled regions.



Day 22 Juphal-Nepalgunj - Kathmandu (Flight)

After breakfast in Juphal, take a domestic flight back to Nepalgunj, retracing the aerial route over the scenic valleys and Himalayan foothills. Upon arrival in Nepalgunj, transfer to catch your connecting domestic flight to Kathmandu, bringing you back to the capital city after completing the Upper Dolpo Trek. Arrive in Kathmandu by afternoon and check into your hotel for a comfortable stay. This travel day offers a smooth transition from high-altitude trekking to the city, allowing trekkers to recover, sort trekking gear, and enjoy modern amenities before the final days in Kathmandu.

Day 23: Free Day in Kathmandu

After returning from the Upper Dolpo Trek, enjoy a free day in Kathmandu to relax, recover, and explore the vibrant capital. This is the perfect opportunity to shop for souvenirs, traditional handicrafts, and local artworks at popular markets like Thamel, Asan, and Indra Chowk. You can also take this day to reflect on your trekking adventure, organize photographs, and enjoy local cuisine at nearby restaurants. This day serves as a comfortable transition between the remote Himalayan adventure and your onward journey, allowing you to rest and prepare for your final departure from Nepal.



Day 24: Departure from Kathmandu

Transfer to Tribhuvan International Airport for your onward flight. Conclude your Upper Dolpo Trek with unforgettable memories of the remote Himalayas and Tibetan culture.

Inclusions:

- Transportation: Round-trip flight tickets between Kathmandu and Lukla, including airport transfers
- Accommodation During Trek: Basic tea house/lodge stays in twin-sharing rooms
- Guide Services: Professional, licensed, and English-speaking trekking guide
- Porter Service: 1 porter for every 2 trekkers (carrying up to 15–20 kg combined)
- Permits: All required trekking permits and local entry fees
- First Aid Kit: Basic first aid supplies carried by the guide
- Support Staff Costs: Wages, meals, accommodation, and insurance for guide and porter
- Government Taxes: All applicable government and local taxes



Exclusions:

- Nepal Visa Fees (available upon arrival at Kathmandu airport)
- Meals on Trek: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner during trekking days
- International Flights to and from Nepal
- Accommodation in Kathmandu before and after the trek (unless specified in the package)
- Personal Expenses: Snacks, beverages, hot showers, battery charging, Wi-Fi, and laundry
- Travel Insurance: Must include emergency medical evacuation coverage
- Trekking Gear: Sleeping bag, trekking poles, and personal equipment (available for rent)
- Tips for Guide and Porter (customary but not mandatory)
- Extra Costs Due to Delays: Weather, strikes, road blockages, or other unforeseen circumstances

Best time for the Upper Dolpo Trek

The best time for the Upper Dolpo Trek is during the spring (April to June) and autumn (September to November) seasons. These months offer the most stable weather, clear mountain views, and comfortable trekking conditions in one of Nepal's most remote Himalayan regions.

Spring (April to June): Spring is one of the most favorable times to explore Upper Dolpo. The weather is warm at lower elevations and pleasant even in higher areas. The trails are filled with blooming wildflowers, and visibility is excellent for viewing snow-capped peaks and high mountain passes.

Autumn (September to November): Autumn brings crisp air, clear skies, and vibrant landscapes after the monsoon rains. It's the most popular trekking season, offering stunning views of Phoksundo Lake, Shey Gumpa, and the surrounding Himalayas. Days are mild, and nights are cool—ideal for camping and photography.



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