



## Details Itinerary for Upper dolpo trek

### **Day 1 - Arrival in Kathmandu and transfer to Hotel**

You will be picked up by our official Nepalgram crew and taken to your hotel from Tribhuvan International Airport.

### **Day 2 - Kathmandu to Nepalgunj flight 1 hour (Afternoon)**

The morning is free for leisure activities, sightseeing, and shopping for any additional trekking supplies. We fly from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj, a border town in the low-lying Terai area, in the late afternoon. We will be relieved to arrive at our guesthouse's relative coolness given the subtropical climate in this area. Our nighttime stay is in Nepalgunj.

### **Day 3 - Dunai to Chhepka(2850m) 6 hours**

From Dunai, we continue down Thuli Bheri until Suligad. From Suligad, we continue down Suligad River, which runs from Phoksumdo Lake via a narrow, densely forested valley. The trail sways occasionally along to the raging white-water river and other times far above it. The path passes through a few small settlements, some of which are empty shacks made of stone, and we stop for lunch in Kageni. As we were on our trip, several of these towns were almost completely covered by an overgrowth of long grasses because they are mostly only inhabited in the winter when the residents of Upper Dolpo bring their livestock down from the high pastures. After lunch, we cross the Anke Khola, and as we go up the river to our campsite at Chepka, it can get rather hot (2850m).

### **Day 4 - Chhepka to Sumduwa(3885m) 5-6 hours**

As we climb the small gorge, we cross the river numerous times as we ascend the undulating track through the bamboo and conifer forests of Shey Phoksundo National Park. In order to take us out of the woodland and onto flower-filled



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meadows, the track at one point climbs gradually for an hour or more. The route becomes easier as the valley gradually widens until we arrive at a bridge that leads to the village of Renje, where we halt for lunch. Renje is made up of a number of these houses. The trail continues as the valley narrows once more beyond this point.

## **Day 5 - Samduwa to Phoksumdo Lake (3600m) 4-5 hours**

As we ascend from Samduwa, the Phoksumdo Khola, a river that originates from the lake, flows freely. We move past Palam, another empty winter settlement, and ascend to a slope that divides Ringmo's wide fields from the small valley below. We catch our first glimpse of Phoksumdo Lake as we look down at a thundering waterfall, one of the tallest in Nepal. We first make a steep descent through the forest before making a steady ascent to the lovely Dolpo-pa town of Ringmo, with its assortment of flat-roofed stone homes, stuccoed chortens, and long walls of prayer-carved mani stones. After passing past the town of Ringmo, we camp near Phoksumdo Lake.

## **Day 6 - Acclimatization/rest day at Phoksumdo Lake.**

We begin our journey to Shey Gompa in Inner Dolpo with a breathtaking trail that circles the lake's westernmost point. The perilous path is carved out of the sheer rock cliffs, and at other parts it is supported by wooden trestles covered with boulders and saplings. The lake's crystal-clear turquoise waters are just below, therefore it is advisable to move forward while paying close attention to your step. This route was powerfully depicted in Eric Valli's outstanding film "Himalaya," which is about the Dolpo people who transport salt from Tibet on their yaks across treacherous passes to sell for essential grain in the south. After completing this strenuous journey, the trail ascends to a crest that offers breathtaking views of Ringmo's lake, lush forest, and vibrant fields, as well as the snow-capped peak of Kang Norbu to the south. At a little over 4000 meters, a



cairn and prayer flags mark our ridge's highest point. From there, we gradually descend to the lake's northern bank, where we have lunch.

## **Day 7- Phoksundo Lake to North Bank(3700m) 4-5 hours**

The trek from Phoksundo Lake to the North Bank, which is located at an altitude of 3700m, typically takes 4-5 hours.

## **Day 8 - North Bank to Kangla Basecamp (4600m) 5-6 hours**

We follow the plain river bank and pine woodland at the foothills of Mount Kanjiruwa from the north bank. The Phoksumdo Valley soon after narrows considerably, with tall rock cliffs on both sides. We must ford a number of tributaries, some of which may require wading. We exit the main valley after about 20 or 30 minutes and turn back toward the north, entering a little gorge. We have a long ascent, frequently without any sign of a track as we ascend the valley's steep sides, passing sporadic grazing fields and fording multiple minor streams. We set up camp at the location that Peter Mathiesson referred to in his book as "Snowfields Camp" because we are following in his footsteps.

## **Day 9 - Kangla Basecamp to Shey Gumba (4370m) 6-7 hours via Kang La pass (5350m)**

To reach the peak of the Kang La, it will take 2 to 3 hours of hard ascent over sloping slate scree slopes that may be covered in snow from our camp (5350m). This high pass, also known as the Ngadra La locally, marks the entrance to Upper Dolpo and is decorated with cairns and prayer flags. We follow the river comfortably for another three hours to reach Shey Gumpa, whose entrance is marked by a red and white chorten and winding lines of mani stones, after a steep 45-minute drop to the valley level. The monastery is situated at the meeting of two rivers on a little grassy area beneath the unusual Crystal Mountain. Although the gumpa, which is encircled by six red-painted buildings, is not particularly imposing physically, the dramatic surroundings leave no mistake



as to why both Buddhists and Bon adherents hold this location in such high regard. We pitched up tent in a meadow with a few herders' huts right below the gompa.

## **Day 10 - Rest day at Shey Gompa**

We have a day to explore the area and finish off camp duties like laundry. The spectacular Kagyupa monastery of Tsa Kang, which is perched on a precarious ledge high up a cliff face, is the destination of our side trip in the afternoon. To get there, we must partially ascend the path that pilgrims use to complete the Crystal Mountain's "Kora," or circuit. We eventually return to Shey Gompa.

## **Day 11 - Shey Gompa to Tora/ Samling Gompa (4120) 6-7 hours**

From Shey Gompa, our trail proceeds north, ascending the east side of the Tartan Khola's hillside and circling about at the head of a tributary valley to a high grazing area close to the Den La. We descend to Tora, where the residents of Bhijer graze their yaks in the summer, by following a long stock track across an open slope. We could pitch up tent at Tora (4500m) or descend to Samling Monastery depending on how long it took to get here (4120m).

## **Day 12 - Tora/ Samling Gompa to Bhijer (3850m) 3 hours**

The oldest Bon Gompa in Dolpo is Samling, which dates back to the eighth century. Its numerous chortens and white and brick-red buildings are dispersed across a grassy slope and are covered in prayer flags. We'll take our time exploring the area. The village of Bhijer (3850m), a charming, hospitable, and distinctly Dolpo Pa settlement that sees very few hikers, is easily accessible from Samling. The traditional Bhijer home has an upper living area and a lower level that serves as an animal sanctuary at night. There is a lot to see and do in the village, which is situated in an open, sunny area. See the barley harvest, look out for the neighborhood women who are spinning, or go to the gompa. A small shop,



a health post, and a school are also present. The kitchen team's last chance to pick up some fresh vegetables before getting to Mugu is here.

### **Day 13 - Bhijer to Tora Khola (3400m) Crossing Yambur La (4800m) 6-7 hours**

As we return to travelling north after leaving Bhijer, the Yambur La presents itself as our first challenge (4800m). On a zigzagging track, it's a really sudden climb that will probably take us four hours. Watch out for the bharal, or wild blue sheep, which are widespread in this region. Moreover, keep an eye out for the rich blue gentians that line the trail. We will drop down past the ruins of the long-gone town of Potal after the pass and continue dropping steeply for an additional hour to reach the Tora Khola (3400m). There is barely enough space to set up camp next to the old wooden cantilever bridge, where it is warmer.

### **Day 14 - Tora Khola to Pho (4020m) 3-4 hours**

Today's stage will be brief; our goal is to be at camp at Pho in the late morning so that we may eat lunch there. We travel upstream (north) for approximately 30 minutes before turning to travel west and sharply upwards to Pho, a little village at 4020 meters that may be the most remote settlement in all of Nepal. There are indications that there are fewer people living here currently. Some of the fields at the village's outskirts have been neglected and are eroding. Nonetheless, Pho is a fantastic area to set up camp because it has level campsites and clean, ample water.

### **Day 15 - Pho to Daldung Khor(4700m) cross Nyingma Gyalzen La (5500m) 8-9 hours**

Again, during this portion of our walk, we may see a lot of blue sheep. The remainder of the day's hike will be similar, if a little less strenuous, up to our and across Nyingma Gyanzen La. This is more than made up for by the fact that we can view multiple snow-peaks of the Kanjiroba Himal ranging in height from 6000



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to 6800 meters from here. After a two-hour descent from Nyimagalzen La, we arrived at Daldung Khor and set up camp.

## **Day 16 - Daldung Khor to Swaksa Khola/Pung Kharka (4500m) 3-4 hours**

Since yesterday was such a long and difficult day, today's hike will be brief. Following breakfast, head down to Swaksa Khola and follow the river for a couple of hours till you arrive at a breathtaking valley. Although locals visit these high valleys every year in the early summer in quest of the precious caterpillar-fungus known as yarsagumba, this lovely valley, which is flowing north-south, plainly sees relatively few trekkers.

## **Day 17 - Pung Kharka to Marjung Khola or the Chyandi Khola (4800m) crossing Cross the Yala La (5250m) 7-8 hours.**

The opening portion of the path takes us beside the Swaksa Khola, where we can keep an eye out for blue sheep hoof prints and snow leopard pug prints in the sand next to the stream. Following a left turn out of the valley, we begin a lengthy, steady rise up a grassy hillside until we reach the Yala La (5250m), which takes us about three hours. Before beginning the rough descent into the Chyandi Khola valley, we'll spend some time at the pass taking in more spectacular views of the snow-capped peaks in all directions. At a height of about 4800 meters, we arrive at our camp in the valley in the late afternoon.

## **Day 18 - Chyandi Khola to Takla Khola (3750m).**

As we descend the Chyandi Khola, today is a lengthy and difficult day. We must traverse a lot of challenging terrain without a well-made trail, potentially using a safety rope on a few brief portions. We'll probably move slowly and have to cross the river multiple times. We will also occasionally need to go above the river to choose the best course, which will require contouring over a sketchy track for a



lengthy period of time before a final zigzagging descent through an old birch forest to the Takla Khola junction. A safety rope might also be necessary for the last river crossing on a log bridge before we get to camp.

## **Day 19 - Takla Khola to Thajuchaur (4000m) Crossing the Chyargo La (5100m) 7-8 hours**

Another hard day of hiking; we start at Chyargo La Phedi at 4300 meters and continue slowly upward for around 5 hours until we reach the cairn-marked Chyargo La (5100 meters). This is a desolate and rocky location, but it has incredible vistas that give us a wonderful overview of some of the terrain we have been traveling over lately. That is a truly untamed landscape. After a lengthy descent, we arrive at a valley that resembles a gorge, where the road is once more precarious and requires us to cross multiple rivers as well as heavy woodland. Thajuchaur, which is located at an elevation of about 4000 meters, has a camping area.

## **Day 20 - Thajuchaur to Shilenchaur Kharka (2945m) 5-6 hours**

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.

## **Day 21 - Sparse Day- It can be used in-case of difficulty or Detour to Mugu village**

If there is a problem with the trip from Pho to Shilenchaur Kharka, we use this day. If not, we take a diversion to Mugu village. While the Great Himalaya Way



continues south from here, we turn north (on the good track) and travel for about three hours to Mugu. On this walk, there's a potential that you'll run into other hikers. When we got to Mugu (3400m), we pitched our tents on the wide, level valley floor directly below the community.

## **Day 22 - Shilenchaur Kharka Trek to Pulu or Riusa (2250m) 7-8 hours.**

We have three days to hike to the airport in Talcha, which is east of Rara Lake. The entire journey will be on passably decent trails that connect the towns in the Mugu Karnali valley. On the first day, we make a steady descent to Tyar, where the Mugu and Namlang Nadi meet, and then go west for another hour or so to a camping location along the river that is either below Pulu or a bit farther upstream from Riusa.

## **Day 23 - Pulu to Kumpha (2010m) 7-8 hours.**

Another somewhat long day in terms of distance, but with only "Nepalese undulation" by the river and no significant climbs. Again, there are many beautiful vistas, and we'll have plenty of chances to talk to the locals we encounter along the way. We pass by the remarkable community of Mangri, which is perched on a bench above the south bank of the river among its terraced fields. We travel south-westward down the Mugu Karnali past the village of Chhaila to a campsite near the homes of Kumpha (2010m).

## **Day 24 - Kumpha to Talcha Airport (2750m) 7 hours.**

On our last day of hiking, we'll get an early start in order to get to the bustling village of Gamgadhi in time for a lodge lunch. After lunch, there is a gradual ascent to the Talcha airport where we set up our last tent. Although there aren't



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many amenities here, there is a nice view to the north-east of the peaks above Mugu.

## **Day 25 - Fly from Talcha to Nepalgunj and Kathmandu.**

The early morning aircraft transports us from Nepalgunj's Terai district, which is hot and muggy, out of the cool, fresh mountains of Dolpo. Nevertheless, this time there is only a brief wait, and we quickly board our aircraft to Kathmandu, where we check into our hotel. It's time to tidy up and take a glance in the mirror now (if you dare). We have to get acclimated to some nice dining and the commotion of Kathmandu's crowded streets this evening.

## **Day 26 - A free day in Kathmandu which can also be used as contingency.**

This day is set aside as a backup in case there are any issues with the weather-dependent flight from Talcha. If all went according to plan, this would be a day to unwind and take in Kathmandu's attractions.

## **Day 27 - Departure day-Fly back to home**

You are transferred to Tribhuvan International Airport by our Nepalgram staff.