

Upper Mustang Trek

Mustang region is beautiful rain shadow of Nepal Himalayas, and the upper part resembles the Tibetan plateau. Lo Manthang – the capital city of the Upper Mustang Kingdom which came under the central government after 2008 – is the destination of trek that is bordered in the Tibetan region. **Lo Manthang** is a fantastic square-walled town sitting on the ‘Plain of Prayers’.

The residents of Upper Mustang closely follow the Tibetan Buddhism. And, the lower Mustang known as Thak valley inhabits by the Thakali people who follow the mixed religion of Buddhism and Hinduism.

This mystic and majestic kingdom of Upper Mustang was closed to westerners until 1992. This independent kingdom situated in strategic location in between China and India dominated the trade for the long time. The region is known for enchanting land of windswept vistas, red-walled monasteries, and feudal towns.

Local legend tells the tale of the great founder of Tibetan Buddhism, **Padmasambhava**, who before building **Samye** (the oldest monastery in Tibet) came to Mustang to stand guard against and battled with the evil powers out to destroy Buddhism. The temple of **Lo Gekhar** in eastern Mustang was believed to be built by Padmasambhava after his triumphant battle and still stands guard today.

Itinerary in Details:

Day 01: Arrival in Kathmandu (1,300 m/4265ft):

Arrival in Kathmandu. Meet with our friendly representative at the arrival terminal of only International airport. And, then you will be transferred to your hotel.

You check-in at your Hotel and then after short rest you can go to explore market area of Thamel – where you can eat your supper, change money, buy some stuffs from supermarket, or buy trekking gears – if you need to do.

Later we take you to our office for the trip briefing.

Overnight at your hotel.

Delay of any kind will postpone the events for next day according to feasibility.

Day 02: Kathmandu Sightseeing - 4 hrs tour.

You start the day with delicious breakfast served at your Hotel. The sightseeing involves tour of two religious and cultural sites of Pashupatinath temple and Boudhanath stupa.

Pashupatinath Temple: It is one of the most celebrated Hindu temples in South-Asia. The temple is devoted to Lord Shiva. This place is a UNESCO world cultural heritage site. The Bagmati river flowing besides the temple is religiously and spiritually significant for Hindus where cremation of dead body takes place. Pashupatinath temple holds the most of prominence during Shivaratri – Shiva’s birthday and thousands of pilgrims gather in the night to celebrate the day.

Boudhanath Stupa: It is one of the biggest Stupas in terms of size and height in Nepal and located in east of Kathmandu in the ancient trade route between India-Nepal and Tibet. The site is peaceful and culturally filled with intermixed influence of Tibetan and Sherpa roots. Stupa

built in the trading route between Kathmandu and Tibet has four pairs of eyes directed towards all four directions. It is believed to be influenced by Mahayana Buddhist philosophy. After short tour of city we return to hotel and prepare for the trek. Overnight will be spent at hotel.

Day 03: Drive from Kathmandu to Pokhara (9,00m/ 2952ft)/ 7 hrs drive:

Pokhara – the beautiful lake city of Nepal nestled in the lap of the majestic Annapurna – is located 200 kilometers west of Kathmandu.

Early morning you embark for long yet scenic and adventurous drive to Pokhara. As you drive out of the Kathmandu valley the road descend to the Trishuli River valley on the other part. The Highway is narrow in breadth, and snake bend in shape thus make the drive thrilling.

After scenic and adventurous drive, arrive at the hotel and rest the remaining evening. You can utilize your rest time exploring around the lakeside or shop around. **Overnight in a hotel.**

Day 04: Fly to Jomsom (2,750 m/9022ft) and trek to Kagbeni (2,820 m/9251ft)/ 25 min flight and 3 hrs walk:

You take the early morning flight which again will give close-up views of the Annapurna range, Nilgiri, Dhaulagiri. Twenty to twenty-five minutes flight in a small aircraft land at Jomsom airstrip beautifully located in the bank of river Kaligandaki.

You will then enjoy the breakfast in one of the restaurant/hotel if you have not in Pokhara (based on the flight timing in the morning). After breakfast and short rest walk along the bank of the Kali Gandaki River to Kagbeni.

The trail is mostly in the river bed thus sandy and with pebbles. It is not that difficult part of the trek, but wind sometime makes your walk almost impossible. This very easy and enjoyable start is at the same time picturesque with rewarding views of tall mountain peaks including Dhaulagiri (8167m/ 26,794ft), Tukucho 6920m/ 22,703ft) and in the west the awesome mountain above Kagbeni – Nilgiri (6940m/ 22,769ft).

Upon reaching Kagbeni check in to your hotel, enjoy the lunch. And in the evening walk around the town which is mystic and mysterious. You can explore the Red Gumpa (Monastery). At the check-post at the north end of the village there is a sign saying ‘Restricted area, tourists, please do not go beyond this point’. Here you will complete your paperwork formalities for you to enter this long-forbidden region of Nepal. **Overnight at local lodge.**

Day 05: Trek from Kagbeni to Chele (3,050 m/10006ft)/ 7 hrs walk:

After breakfast enter this beautiful region of Upper Mustang. The landscape is barren, dry and complete rain shadow. The Kali Gandaki river flowing from the Upper Mustang offers scenic view. You walk right above to the river valley and sometime walk in the river bed. The trail widens significantly revealing an endless stretch of sand and the trek is yet interesting or even challenging sometimes by the passing of mule carrying goods. On the west bank of the river are some caves and Gumpa Kang – the monastery belongs to Nyingmapa sect, the oldest sect of

Tibetan Buddhis, whereas other monasteries in Upper Mustang belongs to the Sakyapa sect. You stop for lunch at the village of Tangbe, where you come across the typical Chortens of Upper Mustang – black, white and red Chortens.

This little town is delicates with narrow alleys through whitewashed houses, fields of buckwheat and barley and apple orchards. Nilgiri Peak continues to dominate the southern skyline. Chusang village is beyond Tangbe at the confluence of the Narshing Khola and Kali Gandaki. After crossing the Kali Gandaki River now you leave the valley and climbs steeply up a rocky valley to the village of Chele where you spend your night here. **Overnight at the mountain lodge.**

Day 06: Trek Chele to Syangboche (3,800 m/12467ft)/ 6 hrs walk:

From Chele after breakfast you climb a steep spur and then continue ascending along the side of a spectacular steep canyon to a pass. Beyond the pass you descend on a pleasant trail to Samar. You climb above Samar to a ridge and then descend into a large gorge past a Chorten before entering another valley. You then cross a stream and after climbing to a pass, you descend along a ridge to Shyangmochen – a tiny settlement with a few tea shops. **Overnight local lodge.**

Day 07: Trek Syangboche to Ghami (3,550 m/11646ft)/ 5 hrs walk:

The trail climbs gently from Shyangbochen and you enter another huge valley before descending to Geling with its extensive fields of barley. As in all the settlements of Mustang, the white and ochre-painted houses are constructed using mud and stones with roofs made of twigs, straw and a mixture of mud and pebbles. Trek to Ghami via Ghami La (3,520m/11548ft). The trail continues to offer many uphill climbs and descend to the river bed or valley and passes various small settlements of similar landscape, architecture, and styles. You cross another pass namely Nyi La (3,840 m/12598ft). The descend from the pass is quite gentle and after half an hour further you reach to a junction in which the right trail leads direct to Charang and the left leads to Ghami. Ghami is a large white-washed village in Mustang. **Overnight local lodge.**

Day 08: Trek Ghami to Charang (3,570 m/11712ft)/ 4 hrs walk:

After breakfast start your walk to the most probably the driest part of Mustang. The trail is full of loose, dry soil/sands and scree which will take your energy and struggle. However the beautiful landscape and the view of the mountains in each directions inspire and encourage you to continue.

It is comparatively short day of walk and you reach Charang – a large spread-out village at the top of the Charang Chu canyon – after some four hours of walk. At the eastern end of the village lies a huge dzong (fortress) and a red Gompa (monastery) which houses an excellent collection of statues and Thangka paintings. **Overnight local lodge.**

Day 09: Trek Tsarang (Charang) to Lomang Thang (3,820 m/12532ft)/ 3.30 hrs walk:

In the morning prior to breakfast, we explore the interesting village of Charang and its large monastery. After breakfast start the trek to Lo Manthang. You climb gently above the valley to a largely isolated Chorten that marks the boundary between Charang and Lo. The trail then broadens and eventually you get the first sight of magnificently walled city of Lo Manthang. The city has only one entrance so you circumambulate the wall to the gate on the northeast corner to enter the town. **Overnight local lodge.**

Day 10: Rest and Exploration day Lo Manthang:

It is the beautiful day of the trip in which you explore the mystic city of the Lo Manthang – the capital city of Upper Mustang kingdom prior to 2008.

The city contains about 150 houses, as well as residences of many lamas (monks of Tibetan Buddhism). There are four major temples within the city and one of them Champa Lhakang contains a huge clay statue of Buddha as well as elaborated mandala painted on the wall. The former king's palace – as the monarchy was abolished from Nepal in 2008 this was also ended as monarch – is an imposing building in the center of the city. Although king's duty while he was in throne was largely ceremonial, the King was respected by the people and consulted about many issues by villagers throughout the kingdom. If you wish you can take a day trip to the upper valley and back by horse or on foot. **Overnight at local lodge.**

Day 11: Trek Lo Manthang to Dhakmar (3,820 m/12532ft) via Marang la (4,300 m/14107ft)/ 7 hrs walk:

Today is comparatively long day with the High Himalayan pass at 4300 m altitude. As soon as you leave Lo Manthang you climb to Marang-la (4,300 m). You continue with your walk on the highland route fairly flat and fair climb to Ghar Gompa – pure virtue of Lo and the practicing Nyingma Sect along with scripture of Padmasambhava. You will spend some time exploring this beautiful monastery and then climb steep down to Dhakmar. **Overnight at local lodge.**

12: Trek Dhakmar to Gelling (3,580 m/11745ft)/ 4 hrs walk:

After breakfast, walk through the pretty beautiful valley. Continue to climb to a ridge and descend to Ghami. From Ghami you arrive wider and gentle path with some ascends and descends to huge town of Gelling. Gelling has beautiful barley field. As in all the settlements of Mustang, the white and ochre-painted houses are constructed using mud and stones with roofs made of twigs, straw and a mixture of mud and pebbles. Explore the rich culture of the village with historic monastery. **Overnight at local lodge.**

Day 13: Trek Gelling to Chele: 7 hrs walk

After breakfast walk in the terrain multiple of ascends and descends to reach Chele. Now you are walking more downhill than uphill to return back. **Overnight local lodge.**

Day 14: Trek back Chele to Kagbeni: 5 hrs trek

Return same way as you walk on the way up. The trail is descending continuously in altitude but you may ascend multiple of places. **Overnight local lodge.**

Day15: Trek back from Kagbeni to Jomsom / 3 hrs walk:

Enjoy the mystic view of the Himalayan peaks – Nilgiri particularly dominates the front view. After breakfast walk along the wide sandy and windy valley of Kali Gandaki river bed. Arrive Jomsom and enjoy the rest of the day relaxing. **Overnight local lodge.**

Day 16: Fly Jomsom-Pokhara and relax in Pokhara/ 20 min fly:

Early morning fly back to Pokhara from Jomsom. Due to the wind in the later afternoon even from the last hour of the morning, all the flights from and to Jomsom operated in the early morning.

The flight is majestic with the view of Annapurna I and other Annapurna massif and Dhaulagiri, Nilgiri, Tukucho Peak and others.

Arrive Pokhara, spend some time at your hotel to refresh and you can explore the lake city around Phewa Lake. Boating in the lake is splendid with the view of the Himalayan peaks reflected in the water. You can enjoy the tranquility of Pokhara. Other places you can explore in Pokhara is beautiful Mountain Museum, Devi's Fall, Peace Stupa, and Gupteshwar Cave. **Overnight in a hotel.**

Day 17: Drive Pokhara to Kathmandu/ 7 hrs drive:

Drive back to Kathmandu. You are driving the same highway as you enter to Pokhara and the Mustang region. Alternatively you can talk with us if you want to fly one way back which is highly recommended. Arrive Kathmandu and **Overnight in a hotel.**

Day 18: Cultural Tour of Kathmandu City / 4 hrs:

After breakfast at your Hotel, we take you to the mysterious Kathmandu city tour. This historical, cultural and spiritual city unveils the social and historical mysteries to visitors. You will walk through the narrow lanes of the ancient Kathmandu – the center of power – that includes markets of Ason, Glass beads market at Indrachowk, oldest supermarket at New Road, Kilagal, and Hidden Stupas inside the family courtyard.

Visit of Kathmandu Durbar Square – the administrative quarter of Malla Kings (fourteenth to eighteenth century), and Shah Kings who ruled Nepal from 1768 until 2008. The most unique experience in the square is the visit to the temple of the living goddess “Kumari”.

After the tour, return back to your Hotel. If you are staying in Thamel, you can hang around this bustling tourist market and enjoy shopping. **Overnight in Hotel.**

Day 19: Departure Day:

As per your flight schedule, you will be transferred to the international airport of Kathmandu three hours prior to the flight time and your wonderful trip in the majestic Himalayan region ends here.

Cost Includes:

- ✓ Airport Pick Up and Drop Off (International & Domestic) in private vehicle
- ✓ Accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara in the Hotel with breakfast included
- ✓ Tea house (Lodge) accommodation during the biking trip in the mountain in full board (Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included)
- ✓ Tea / Coffee (3 times a day) during trek
- ✓ English speaking licensed Trekking Guide. The number of guides and assistant guides is dictated by the group size (Assistant guide for more than 5 pax).
- ✓ Air ticket (Pokhara – Jomsom - Pokhara)
- ✓ All food, drinks, lodging, salary, insurance, medical equipment, and transportation for staffs
- ✓ Land transportation as required in luxury vehicle
- ✓ Kathmandu Cultural and Historical sightseeing with a Tour Guide, private transportation, and entrance fee and Pokhara City tour
- ✓ Trekking Permit (TIMS)
- ✓ Annapurna Conservation Area (ACAP) entry permit
- ✓ Upper Mustang Special Entry permit
- ✓ Entry permits and fees for all temples, parks, monasteries, and cultural and historical sites during the tour in Pokhara and Kathmandu.
- ✓ Down jacket, sleeping bag, fleece liner, and a duffel bag
- ✓ All government taxes

Cost Excludes

- Any bar bills (alcoholic drinks, mineral water, and cold drinks), cigarettes, client's personal insurance, and any kind of unforeseen expenses.
- Lunch and Dinner in Kathmandu and Pokhara.
- International airfare
- Travel Insurance
- Tips for Guide Porter & Driver (Tips are not compulsory but expected)
- Anything that is not mentioned in Inclusion

What to bring

This list outlines the required things to bring during the trekking tours. There are various selections and brands that you can choose as per your interest. All required trekking equipments can be bought or even hired easily at a reasonable price in Kathmandu.

General

1. Four seasons Sleeping bag (Optional/we can provide one if you need it but is to be returned after the trek)
2. Duffel or Rucksack bag & suitcase (Optional/we can provide one if you need it but is to be returned after the trek)
3. Daypack
4. Down Jacket (Optional/we can provide if you need one but is to be returned after the trek)

Upper Body - Head / Ears / Eyes

1. Shade hat or baseball cap - some people drape a bandana down the back of their head and then put a baseball cap on to hold it in place. This can be a flexible alternative while keeping the sun off your ears and neck.
2. Warm wool or synthetic hat that covers your ears.
3. Balaclava - lightweight, thinner variety.
4. Glacier glasses-
5. Headlamp
6. Some people like ear-muffs; These are optional; a good hat, balaclava, and hooded jacket should really be sufficient, but this is a personal choice for some people (optional).
7. A neck warmer is another piece of gear for extra warmth if you feel you will need it (optional).

Hand

1. A pair liner gloves, thin wool or synthetic, useful alone on mild days or as a layer inside other gloves / mitts for additional warmth.
2. One pair warm gloves
3. Instant hand warmers are always nice in a pinch, but really shouldn't be necessary on the trek. Bringing appropriate hand protection as recommended above, should be sufficient (optional).

Core Body

1. T-shirts (2).
2. Light and expedition weight thermal tops.

3. Fleece jacket or pullover.
4. Fleece Wind-Stopper jacket (optional).
5. Waterproof (preferably breathable fabric) shell jacket.
6. 2 women sports bras, Synthetic, no cotton!
7. Long shirts(2)

Lower Body – Legs

1. Two pairs nylon hiking shorts - Quick drying type, not cotton!
2. Underwear, stay away from cotton (4).
3. Two pairs lightweight long underwear - capilene or other synthetic.
4. One pair soft shell pants - synthetic, full zip from top and bottom preferable.
5. Two pairs trekking pants, preferably that zip on/off at the knees so they double as shorts.
6. One pair hard shell pants. Waterproof / breathable, Gore-Tex or equivalent is best. Should zip from the top and bottom - this makes it easier to put on over boots without getting undressed should the weather change once you are underway for the day.
7. One pair cotton pants (loose jeans/khakis).
8. All clothing should be kept dry using waterproof stuff sacks or large puncture resistant plastic bags.

Feet

1. Two-four pairs of liner socks, synthetic or capilene.
2. Two-three pairs heavy weight socks to be worn over liner socks.
3. One pair light weight socks, a good option for the lower / warmer parts of the trail.
4. One pair light to medium weight water proof hiking/trekking boots. Ensure a good fit with layered socks and you have worn them before to get used to it (otherwise you will get lots of blister).
5. One pair light trekking shoes or sneakers. Good for around the camp/lodges and in Kathmandu.
6. One pair sandals (Optional).

Medicines and First Aid Kits

(Please note our guide will also carry the first aid kit bag during the trek. However we still recommend you to bring your personal first aid kit as well)

1. Extra Strength Excedrin for altitude related headaches.
2. Ibuprofen for general aches and pains.
3. Immodium or Pepto bismol capsules for upset stomach or diarrhea.
4. Diamox (commonly prescribed as Acetazolamide) 125 or 250mg tablets for altitude sickness. Please discuss with us before starting to take this medicine.

5. One small personal sized first-aid kit with blister treatments such as mole skin, band-aids, some waterproof tape, anti-infection ointments, etc. Your guides will have more extensive medical gear, but you should have the basics for general use.

Miscellaneous

1. Passport and extra passport photos (4 copies).
2. Airline ticket (Please make a copy and leave on at our office in KTM just in case if you need to change the date of your).
3. Durable wallet / pouch for travel documents, money & passport.
4. Lip balm. At least SPF 20, 2 sticks. A string taped to the stick is helpful, to hang around your neck and some are now being sold with a cord already attached. Handy as it avoids you from having to stop and look for it.
5. Sunscreen. SPF 40 is recommended and should be relatively new since it loses its' effectiveness over time.
6. Pocket knife or small Swiss Army type.
7. Water purification Iodine tablets or Polar-pure crystals.
8. Toiletry kit. Be sure to include toilet paper stored in a plastic bag, hand wipes, and liquid hand sanitizer, towel, soap, etc.
9. Two bandanas.

Optional

1. One pair adjustable trekking poles. Although these are listed as optional, these can be of great assistance to people who may think of themselves and generally clumsy or with bad knees, ankles, etc, especially when going downhill
2. Favorite snack foods
3. Paperback books, cards, mp3 player (there are a couple of stops where you could recharge. Avoid players with moving hardware as it may not function. Remember, keep these items light weight
4. Binoculars
5. One light weight point & shoot camera or 1 large SLR. Digital cameras are ok, but you must keep the batteries warm when not in use
6. Hydration bladder with drinking tube and tube insulator
7. A pee bottle for men and pee funnel for woman, some swear by them to avoid that chilly late night trip
8. One small stainless steel thermos

All garments should be kept dry using waterproof stuff sacks or large puncture resistant plastic bags.