

Overview

Our wonderful Upper Mustang trek starts from Jomsom after taking a scenic flight from Pokhara, leading you to the hidden Shangri-La of the ancient Buddhist kingdom of Mustang, also called Lo. Lo used to be part of the Tibetan empire, and is therefore closely connected to Tibet. Tibetan Buddhism is still being practiced in a very pure form and villages are built in Tibetan style, with white-washed houses with firewood tucked on the roofs. Until recently you could only come to Upper Mustang with a fully organized camping trek. However, nowadays some villagers have opened up small guesthouses and you can stay in a guesthouse in overnight place. While staying there, you are welcome to sit with them in the kitchen. In Tibetan culture, the kitchen is the center of the house and is built like a kind of living room. So there is no better way to learn a bit about daily life than spending time in the kitchen!

Not only the culture and tradition but also the landscape is very much related to Tibet. Mustang lies in the rain shadow of the Dhaulagiri and you walk in a completely desolate landscape, surrounded by rocks in all kinds of colors and bizarre formations. In this barren landscape, the villages with their bright-colored fields are like oases. The trail follows the salt caravan route of the old days, during which the people of Mustang traded Tibetan salt with grain from the lowlands. The goal of the Upper Mustang trek is the capital of the Upper Mustang, LoManthang. Lo Manthang is a medieval old town, surrounded by a huge town wall. From the pass Lo La (3950 m) you can see the town shimmering in the distance in the barren landscape. Entering LoManthang through the town gate you enter a different world. It is just wonderful to wander through the narrow alleys. On several corners of the street, you can find small groups of women spinning wool and discussing the news of the day.

At the end of the afternoon, big herds of goats are being let through the city gate and the narrow alleys, back to their sheds, which are inside the town. In Lo Manthang you can find the palace of the king, a huge 4-story high building. When the king is at home, you can even visit him sometimes. The king doesn't have any real power anymore but is of course still highly respected by his people. Besides, there are a few beautiful big monasteries, for example, the ThugchenGompa, built in the 15th century. Or visit the Amchi Museum and Amchi School. An amchi is a traditional Tibetan doctor. There are 2 amchis living in Lo Mangtang, who are also the official doctors of the king. They founded a school to preserve this ancient wisdom. Also interesting is a ride by horse to Chhoser, where you can visit a small monastery and a century-old cave dwelling, situated high in the rocks.

Getting There

The most convenient way to get to Upper Mustang is to fly from Pokhara to Jomsom and start the trek from there. The flight is an attraction in itself, flying through the deepest gorge in the world, between the Dhaulagiri and the Nilgiri. You follow the famous Kali Gandaki River upstream, partly walking in the river bed itself, to Kagbeni.

Itinerary

Upper Mustang Trek Itinerary will be 10 to 14 days long depending on your time frame and interest plus you will have to add transportation days in the duration. From Kagbeni the restricted area of Upper Mustang starts. The trail goes northwards and brings you in 4 to 6 days to Lo Manthang. You cross pass after pass, which are all between 3,500 and 4,000 m. You can return partly by a different way via Dhakmar, crossing 2 passes of around 4,200 m. Close to Dhakmar you can find the oldest Tibetan monastery in the world, the Lo Gekar Monastery. Lo Gekar Monastery was built in the 8th century by the famous Tibetan magician Guru Rinpoche. He had to kill a powerful demon first and the blood of the demon painted the rocks around Dhakmar bright red.

Upper Mustang Trek itinerary with an extended version of the alternative route via Yara - Luri Gompa:

After visiting Lo Manthang there is an alternative route via Yara – Tangbe - Muktinath in the west. This route is very demanding but offers a much better landscape view and visiting a Luri Gompa is worth it. This route is also can be done as a teahouse trek with no camping required and good to avoid dirt roads but this route can be challenging for novice trekkers.

Lo Manthang to Yara, lunch at Dhi Gaun

Excursion to Luri Gompa

Trek to Tangbe

Trek to Tetang

Trek to Muktinath

Trek to Jomsom/Marpha

Upper Mustang Permit Cost

Upper Mustang has been a restricted area and was forbidden until 1992 for foreign visitors to enter the kingdom. Nowadays foreigners are allowed, but to go into Upper Mustang visitors have to buy a permit of US\$ 500 per person (to be arranged through a registered trekking agency and valid for 10 days, each additional day costs US\$ 50). Plus you will need an ACAP (Annapurna Conservation Area Project) permit which costs NPR 3000 (about USD 30) per person.

Highlights

- Kali Gandali Valley and it's gorge which is deepest in the world.
- Classic Tibetan Kagbeni village. Kagbeni is one of the beautiful villages in the world.
- Lo-manthang, the wall city and centuries old Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries.
- Chhungsi Cave, 1200 years old Ghar Gompa, Khanpa Caves in Chhoser Valley.
- Trans Himalaya which is said to be under the rain shadow in the world.
- Give you the feeling and experience that you are in Tibet.

Outline Itinerary

Day 01 : Fly to Pokhara. Pokhara sightseeing or rest and relax in Pokhara.

Day 02 : Fly to Jomsom (8921ft. 2720m) and trek to Kagbeni (9216ft. 2810m).

Day 03 : Trek to Chele (10004ft. 3050m) via Tangbe/Chhusang for lunch.

Day 04 : Trek to Ghilling (11709ft. 3570m). Explore monasteries and village.

Day 05 : Trek to Ghami (3,460m/11,352ft). Explore monasteries and village.

Day 06 : Trek to Charanag (11677ft. 3560m). Explore monasteries and village.

Day 07 : Trek to Lo Manthang (12,238ft. 3,730m). Visit monasteries, king's palace and museum.

Day 08 : Excursion Choser village, back to Lo Manthang after visiting monasteries and caves.

Day 09 : Trek to Drakmar (3810 m/12,500ft): 6-7 hours via Ghar Gompa

Day 10 : Trek to Syangmochen (3,806m/12,484ft): 5-6 hours

Day 11 : Trek to Chhuksang (3050m/10,004ft): 5-6 hours

Day 12 : Trek to Jomsom (2,700/8,856ft): 6-7 hours

Day 13 : Fly back to Pokhara

Day 14 : Back to Kathmandu by flight

Cost Includes

- Government certified English speaking friendly local guide.
- An assistant guide if the number of participants are above 6 people.
- 1 Sharing porter for two trekkers during the trek (weight limit 25kg).
- 2 Nights deluxe room in 2** hotel in Pokhara with buffet breakfast.
- Domestic flight fare between Kathmandu and Pokhara.
- Pokhara – Jomsom - Pokhara round flight worth of USD 320.00 per person.
- Round flight of your guide.
- Trekking lodge accommodation on twin bed sharing basis during the trek.
- .Meals: 12 Breakfasts, 11 Lunches and 11 Dinners during the trek.
- All necessary upper Mustang trekking permits.

- Guide and porters fee with all their expenses.
- Taxes and paper work charges.

Cost Excludes

- Transfers, accommodation, meals and sightseeing in Kathmandu.
- Meals in Pokhara except breakfasts
- Bar bills, beverages like coke, fanta, sprite, mineral water, can juice etc.
- Personal nature expenses, toiletries, hot shower, laundry, internet and phone calls.
- Personal travel insurance and rescue operation charge in case of emergency.
- Expenses of extra adventure, donations in monasteries (your choice).
- Tips for your guide and porters.