

Nepal 2019. Friends trip to Upper Dolpo and Upper Mustang Regions.

We have two trips planned to the Upper Dolpo this year back to back due to the interest and it will help facilitate the founder of Altitude Project to work with the schools in the area that he is sponsoring. The other area I'm organizing a trek is the Upper Mustang (I was there last year and this may be my last visit due to construction of a major road up the valley). I am arranging it so that you can do Dolpo and continue on to Mustang. Or do one or the other. In terms of trekking, the Dolpo is hard and Mustang moderate. The hardness factor is much higher passes (5000m+) and a longer trek.



The Dolpo Region is a place onto itself. I have been a couple times in the early 90's when the region first opened up (Lower Dolpo) again in 2014 and Upper Dolpo in 2015 and an epic trip in 2017 from Jumla via RaRa Lake and the Great Himalayan Trail. It is a remote and spectacular part of Nepal. But it's beginning to change with more tourism so would like to do more before the change. Most of the region is protected by Shey Phoksundo National Park. The villages are very Tibetan style and have impressive gompas and monasteries. There are strong links to Tibet. We need to find the right combination of people that want to commit to a month in Nepal for each of the treks.



The Dolpo treks will start with a flight to Nepalgunj where we spend a nite before catching an early morning flight to the remote airstrip of Juphal. We meet our trekking crew there and begin the walk to the Upper Dolpo.

The first trek we travel along the Lower Dolpo route and will stop a day in Dho Tarap where the Crystal Mountain School Silver Jubilee Celebration and Dolpo Festival will occur. From there we continue to Saldang over our first 5000m pass. We will spend 3 days in Saldang exploring the area. There will be a celebration of the school, which is the original focus of Altitude project. Our trek back takes us to the famous Shey Ghompa and past Phoksundo Lake. We will cross two 5000m passes on the way out. The trekking will end at Juphal where the group flies back to Kathmandu via Nepalgunj.



The second Upper Dolpo trek will go back to Saldang via Phoksundo Lake and Shey Ghompa. After a couple days in Saldang we will continue along the Great Himalayan Trail to Jomsom. In total there are five – 5000m plus passes on this trek. It is a rewarding yet strenuous trek more so than the first one. From Jomsom there will be a flight back to Pokhara where you can spend some time sightseeing and relaxing before driving back to Kathmandu. There is the option of flying back to Kathmandu as well.



The Mustang trek is a culturally rich trek full of arid valleys, eroded canyons, ochre valleys, yaks, colorful-painted mud brick houses, chortens and a walled city all set to a backdrop

of majestic mountains. It was closed till the early 90's and after that only a limited number of trekkers were allowed to visit each year hence the hefty royalty payment. The highest point on this trek is 4325m so acclimatization is easier than most treks in Nepal.



The Upper Mustang trek permit starts in Kagbeni following a flight and/or bus trip from Kathmandu to Pokhara and then an early morning

flight to Jomsom. Our restricted area permit allows us 10 days in the region but for this trip will extend for additional 2 days to allow exploration up in the Lo Manthang area. A detailed itinerary is available for those interested in this trek.



On all treks we cover a wide range of elevations so expect weather from tropical to possible snow at higher elevations. A suggested list of clothing and extras will be provided closer to the trek. Nothing you don't have for Canada.



These treks are fully catered and all you will be carrying during the day is a daypack. Your typical day starts with tea served in your tent/room along with hot wash water around 6:30am. After getting out of your tent, you pack up your stuff for the porters/horses to carry while the staff takes down the tents. The porter/horse crew takes off while we eat a hot breakfast. Then it's trek time walking at your own pace till lunch. Meanwhile the kitchen crew cleans up and takes down the kitchen/dinning tents and usually passes us to set up for lunch. Here you will stop for about an hour and get



refueled. The process starts over again. We walk and kitchen crew cleans up and passes us to set up for camp where we usually have a snack of tea and biscuits before dinner. You visit the nearby town or wash up or both. Meanwhile the tents are set up, we unpack and dinner is prepared. After dinner it's usually bed by 8:00pm and the process starts over the next day.



Trip dates:

For the first Upper Dolpo trip we all need to be in Kathmandu by *September 04th*. The return to Kathmandu is *September 29th* and international flights can be booked home anytime after up to *October 03rd* to stay within the 30 day visa depending on your arrival date.

The second Dolpo trip should be in Kathmandu by *September 27th* to make permit arrangements and depart on the 30th by plane for trek. It will be tight to stay under the 30 day visa for this trek so extensions can be arranged. International flights home can be booked after the *October 29th*. I can provide more information on options if you want to do further travel and/or sightseeing.



The Mustang trip will need to have the group in Kathmandu by *October 23rd*. After a day in Kathmandu the group leaves for Pokhara to catch the flight to Jomsom and the trip start. The return to Kathmandu is *November 13th* after few days in Pokhara and international flights can be booked for the 14th onwards. If there are people who want to extend the trek I can arrange a walk out via Tatopani (hot springs) and over to Poon Hill as a teahouse trek. You would need an extra 6 days. I have done that in the past.

If interested in any of these trips you need to be in Kathmandu by the indicated date so we can process permits. There is a lot to see before leaving the city especially if it's your first time to Nepal.

If you wish to stay longer after the trek that is fine and there are a host of other things to do like rafting, jungle visit or scenic flights etc. I can answer any questions about that.

Cost: The treks are priced out based on actual trekking/travel days and shared accommodation. We do need a minimum of 6 people with 8 being ideal to make the treks happen at these prices. I will *need to have people confirm ASAP* (particularly the first trek as there are several groups going in for the Dho Festival and flights are limited). At this time we would only need a deposit for internal flights so we can book our favorite cook and we can secure bookings for the internal flights that tend to fill up fast. The earlier you decide the earlier you can also book an international flight to Nepal.



Upper Dolpo 1 - 23 Days Trekking including 2 flight days: \$3245 US all inclusive. Included in the price are Upper Dolpo restricted area permit, National Park Permit, Lower Dolpo permit and internal transportation: Permits (\$553) Flights Kathmandu to Nepalgunj and next day Nepalgunj to Juphal return (\$642).

Upper Dolpo 2 - 26 Days Trekking including 2 flight days: \$3385 US all inclusive. Included in price are Upper Dolpo restricted area permit, National Park Permit, Annapurna Permit, Lower Dolpo permit and internal transportation: Permits (\$586), Flights Kathmandu to Nepalgunj and next day Nepalgunj to Juphal and flight Jomsom to Pokhara. (\$586).

Mustang - 16 Days Trekking including 2 travel days: \$2275 US that includes Restricted area permit: \$600 (no getting away from this.), Annapurna permit (\$33) and TIMS card (\$10). Internal transportation: both private bus to Pokhara and back to Kathmandu as well as Pokhara - Jomsom return flight (\$280).

Trip includes:

- Airport pickup and departure service.
- 3 meals a day and snacks while trekking with tented camp accommodation and/or teahouse accommodation provided.
- Restricted area permit fees (\$50US/day)
- National Park permit fees/ TIMS card.
- Experienced guide, cook, sherpas and porters.
- Staff food, accommodation, clothing, salary and insurance.
- Internal transportation including flights.
- Hotel accommodation: Pokhara/Nepalgung.
- Farewell dinner in Kathmandu.



Trip does not include:

- Airfare to Nepal.
- Meals in Kathmandu/Pokhara with the exception of farewell dinner.
- Accommodation before and after trek.
- Bar bills.
- Expenses of a personal nature.
- Travel insurance. (important).
- Trip tip for the Nepali staff.



That's about it for now until I know who is interested and committed. Of course a lot more info is available on-line and in the Lonely Planet's "Trekking in Nepal". I also have a day-by-day itinerary the company sent me for Dolpo as well as my detailed write-up for the Mustang that I can send out.

Namaste - david.

Any questions: gluns.nepal@gmail.com 250-354-3978

