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Dolpo Mugu Trek - 27 Days

Dolpo Mugu trek is one of the most adventure treks in Nepal, this trek challenging and enthralling which stretches through remote corner of North Western Nepal. This ultimate trekking starts from Dolpo to Mugu thorugh the Upper Dolpo and Upper Mugu. The route leads through the spectacular mountain scenery of Kanjiruwa massif and northern border peaks. This is an extremely adventure trip which stretches across the half dozens of 5000m+ passes. Besides the mountain glory and natural immersion, it also offers the cultural immersion. The culture of Mugum ethnic people, Dolpo ethnic people, the ancient monasteries and remote villages are another rewards of this trek.

Dolpo Mugu trekking, start from Juphal and run past the Phoksundo Lake for fabled Crystal Monastery Shey. In Bhijer we branch off from the main route and wander very lonely roads over high passes and threw deep gorges by Mugu. The few villages here are considered the most remote throughout. Our trekking brings us to the biggest lake of Nepal, the Rara Lake National Park. Dolpo to Rara traverse trek connects two of the most beautiful high altitude lakes in Nepal. Starting in the barren yet stunningly beautiful landscape of Dolpo, and ending in the equally beautiful Mugu district.

Dolpo Mugu trek route is a three weeks trek, and it pass through the remote beautiful villages of Dolpo and Mugu. The trail come across six high passes along the high, steep, narrow and rocky, of the beaten tracks. From Juphal we pass through amazing waterfalls (Phoksundo Water falls) and stunning Phoksumdo Lake. Passing though Phoksundo lake crossing the notorious Kang La pass(5360m) leads to revered and sacred place Shey Gompa. From Shey Gomp our route continues via Samling Monastery to Bhijer and Pho. Beyond Pho village we immerse in wilderness for a week, and come across through three high passes, Nyimagyalzen La (5567m), Yala Pass (5414m) and Chyargo La(5150m) to Shailenchaur Kharka. This is an supposedly an old smugglers route, this is also one of the variants of the Great Himalaya Trail; only few trekkers rarely treks this way. From Shilenchaur we detour to Mugu village and following the Mugu Karnali river, trek end at Rara Lake/Talcha.

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PRICE INCLUDES

- Airport pickup and drop.
- 3 Nights Hotel Accommodations in Kathmandu.
- One-night hotel accommodation and dinner in Nepalgunj.
- Domestic airfare: Kathmandu-Nepalgunj -Dolpo & Talcha- Nepalgunj and Kathmandu.
- All the government procedures.
- Lower Dolpo, Upper Dolpo, and Upper Mugu, trekking permits, and National Park fees.
- One experienced English-speaking guide, Cook, Helpers, and Porters/Mules.
- Trekking equipment -Mattresses, Member tents, and Kitchen utensils.
- Three-time meals during a trek along with Tea/coffee and snacks.
- Staff's salary, food, insurance, and clothing.
- Farewell dinner in Kathmandu

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights and visa fee.
- Personal expenses and meals in Kathmandu.
- Travel insurance, Rescue, and evacuation.
- Tips and gratitude for staffs.
- Donation and local entrance fee.
- Extra baggage load in domestic flights.

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ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu and transfer to Hotel

Our representative will pick up you from Tribhuvan international airport to hotel.

Day 2: Kathmandu to Nepalgunj flight 1 hour (Afternoon)

The morning is free to relax or for sightseeing and shopping for any extra gear needed for the trek. In the afternoon we take a short flight from Kathmandu to the Indian-Nepal border town of Nepalgunj in the lowland Terrai region. The climate here is sub-tropical and we will be relieved to reach the relative cool of our guesthouse. We stay overnight in Nepalgunj.

Day 3: Dunai to Chhepka(2850m) 6 hours

From Dunai, we follow again Thuli Bheri down ward till Suligad, from here we follow Suligad River which is flows down from Phoksumdo Lake through a steep and highly vegetated valley. The trail undulates, sometimes beside and sometimes high above the tumbling white-water river. There are scattered villages along the route including the deserted crude stone houses and at Kageni we take our lunch. Many of these villages are only occupied during the winter months when the communities of Upper Dolpo bring their animals down from the high pastures and at the time of our trek they can be almost hidden in an overgrowth of tall grasses. After lunch we cross the Anke Khola and it can be quite hot as we make our way up the river to our campsite at Chepka (2850m).

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

We cross and re-cross the river several times as we make our way up the narrow gorge, ascending the undulating trail through forests of bamboo, and conifer and lush vegetation of Shey Phoksundo National park. At one point the trail climbs steadily for an hour or more to bring us out of the forest and into flower-strewn meadows. Eventually the valley opens up a little and the going becomes easier until we reach a bridge leading to several houses which make up the village of Renje and we stop here for lunch. Beyond here the valley narrows once more and the trail continues to

Day 5: Sumduwa to Phoksumdo Lake (3600m) 4-5 hours

From Samduwa we climb upwards, the river is known as the Phoksumdo Khola and runs crystal clear from the lake. We pass Palam, another deserted winter village and climb up to a ridge which separates the open fields of Ringmo from the narrow valley below. A roaring waterfall, one of the highest in Nepal, lies below us and we get our first glimpse of Phoksumdo Lake. Descending steeply through the forest we then climb steadily to reach the charming Dolpo-pa settlement of Ringmo with its collection of flat roofed stone houses, stuccoes chortens and long walls of prayer-carved mani stones. We pass through Rigmo village and set up camp at the bank of Phoksundo lake.

Day 6: Acclimatization/rest day at Phoksumdo Lake.

We start our trek to Shey Gompa in Inner Dolpo with a spectacular trail around the western end of the lake. The precarious path is chiseled from the steep rock walls and in places is supported on wooden trestles woven with saplings and covered with rocks. The sparkling pure turquoise waters of the lake lie directly below and it is wise to proceed with full attention to your footing. This trail was dramatically featured in Eric Valli's brilliant film 'Himalaya"

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about the life of the people of Dolpo who bring their yaks over difficult passes bearing salt from Tibet to trade for vital grain in the south. After this high traverse, the trail climbs to a ridge giving spectacular views over the lake, the dark green forest, and the bright fields of Ringmo with the snow peak of Kang Norbu to the south. A cairn and prayer flags mark our highpoint on the ridgeat a little above 4000 metres, beyond which we make a gradual descent to the lake's northern shore where we take lunch.

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

We start our trek to Shey Gompa in Inner Dolpo with a spectacular trail around the western end of the lake. The precarious path is chiseled from the steep rock walls and in places is supported on wooden trestles woven with saplings and covered with rocks. The sparkling pure turquoise waters of the lake lie directly below and it is wise to proceed with full attention to your footing. This trail was dramatically featured in Eric Valli's brilliant film 'Himalaya" about the life of the people of Dolpo who bring their yaks over difficult passes bearing salt from Tibet to trade for vital grain in the south. After this high traverse, the trail climbs to a ridge giving spectacular views over the lake, the dark green forest, and the bright fields of Ringmo with the snow peak of Kang Norbu to the south. A cairn and prayer flags mark our highpoint on the ridgeat a little above 4000 metres, beyond which we make a gradual descent to the lake's northern shore where we take lunch.

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

From the north bank we follow the plain river bank and pine forest at foothill of Mt. Kanjiruwa.Soon afte The Phoksumdo Valley now becomes quite narrow with high rock walls on both sides. We are forced to cross several tributaries and some may have to be waded. After 20 or 30 minutes we leave the main valley and head north again entering a narrow gorge. We have a long climb, often with no trace of any trail as we progress up the steep sided valley, passing occasional grazing areas and crossing several side streams. We are following in Peter Mathiesson's footsteps here and we camp at the spot he named 'Snowfields Camp' in his book.

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

It will take 2 to 3 hours from our camp, climbing awkwardly on loose slate scree slopes which may have a covering of snow, to reach the summit of the Kang La (5350m). This high pass is gateway to Upper Dolpo, also known locally as the Ngadra La and is adorned with cairns and prayer flags. We make a steep descent of around 45 minutes to the valley floor and follow the river easily for a further 3 hours to reach Shey Gompa, the entrance of which is marked by a red and white chorten and snaking lines of mani stones. The monastery is located beneath the strange Crystal Mountain on a small grassy area at the confluence of two rivers. Physically the gompa, surrounded by half a dozen red-painted buildings, is not very imposing, but the setting is very dramatic and there is no doubt why this place is so revered by both Buddhists and followers of the Bon religion. We set up our camp just below the gompa in a meadow containing a few herders' huts.

Day 10: Rest day at Shey Gompa

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We have a day to explore the environs and to catch up on laundry and other camp chores. In the afternoon we side trip to visit the amazing Kagyupa monastery of Tsa Kang which is perched on a narrow ledge high on a cliff face. To get there we have to climb part way on the trail which pilgrims follow to make the 'Kora' or circuit of the Crystal Mountain. And we get back to Shey Gompa again.

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

Our trail heads north from Shey Gompa, cutting up the hillside on the east side of the Tartan Khola and skirting around at the head of a tributary valley to a high grazing area near the Den La. Following a broad stock trail across the open hillside, we drop down to Tora where the people from Bhijer graze their yaks in the summer. Depending on how long it has taken to get here, we could set up camp at Tora (4500m) or drop down to Samling Monastery (4120m).

Day 12: Tora/ Samling Gompa to Bhijer (3850m) 3 hours

Samling is the oldest Bon Gompa in Dolpo and it is established in the 8th century. Its several white and brick-red buildings and chortens are scattered across a grassy slope and adorned with prayer flags. We will spend some time looking around. From Samling it's just a short walk to the village of Bhijer (3850m), a pleasant, welcoming and very Dolpo Pa village which sees very few trekkers. The house at Bhijer typically have an upper living space with the ground floor being used to shelter animals at night. The village has an open, sunny location and there's lots to see and do here. Look out for the local women doing their spinning, watch the barley harvest or visit the gompa. There is also a simple school, shop and a health post. This is the last place where the cook team may be able to purchase some fresh vegetables before reaching Mugu.

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

Leaving Bhijer and heading north again, the first obstacle we are faced with is the Yambur La (4800m). It's a pretty abrupt climb on a zig-zagging trail which is likely to take us 4 hours. Look out for the wild blue sheep (bharal) which are not uncommon in this area. Look out also for the deep blue gentians that grow alongside the trail. Beyond the pass, we'll drop down through the remains of the long-deserted village of Potal and continue descending steeply for another hour to the Tora Khola (3400m). It's warmer down here and there's just about room to camp close to the old wooden cantilever bridge.

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

Just a short stage today; we'll aim to reach camp at Pho in the late morning and have lunch there. We head downstream (north) for about half an hour and then turn to head westwards and steeply uphill to the small village of Pho (4020m) which may be the most remote settlement Nepal. Few people live here now and there are signs that the numbers are dwindling. Some of the fields on the edge of the village are eroded and no longer maintained. Nevertheless, Pho is a good place to make camp with level pitches and a clean and plentiful water supply.

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

Once again, we are likely to see lots of blue sheep on this part of our route. We then have a similar, if slightly less steep, continuation of the day's walk up to our and cross Nyingma Gyanzen La . From here we can see numerous 6000 to 6800 metre snow-peaks of the Kanjiroba Himal more than make up for that. From Nyimagalzen La we

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descent down for 2 hours and reach at Daldung Khor and we ste our camp.

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

Today is short trek, as we had very long and hard day yesterday. After breakfast descend to Swaksa Khola and following the river for 2-3 hours we reach at magnificent valley. This is a magnificent valley trending north-south which clearly sees very few trekkers, although these high valleys are visited in early summer each year by local people searching for the valuable caterpillar-fungus known as yarsagumba.

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

The route initially takes us alongside the Swaksa Khola and we can look out for the hoof marks of blue sheep and the pug marks of snow leopards in the sand beside the stream. We then turn left out of the valley and make a long and sustained ascent across a grassy hillside to the Yala La (5250m) which we reach after about 3 hours. We'll spend a bit of time at the pass to enjoy more great views, snow-capped peaks in all directions, before setting off on the rocky descent into the valley of the Chyandi Khola. We reach our camp in the valley at an elevation of around 4800 metres in the late afternoon.

Day 18: Chyandi Khola to Takla Khola (3750m).

Today is a long and challenging day as we descend the Chyandi Khola. There is no well-made path and we have to negotiate a lot of difficult terrain, possibly including the use of a safety rope on some short sections. Progress is likely to be slow and we will need to ford the river several times. Equally, we will have to climb up above the river at times to find the best route and this will involve contouring on a poor trail for extended periods, before a final zig-zagging descent through ancient birch forest to the junction with the Takla Khola. A final river crossing on a log bridge before our arrival at camp may also require the use of a safety rope.

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

Another long day, initially trekking to Chyargo La Phedi at 4300 metres and then steadily upwards to the cairn-marked Chyargo La (5100m), which we reach after around 5 hours. This is a bleak and rocky place but with amazing views which provide a great overview of some of the geography we have been travelling through over recent days. It really is wild terrain. A long descent then takes us into a gorge-like valley where the route becomes more tenuous again, with a mix of thick forest and several river crossings to negotiate. There is a place to camp at Thajuchaur at around 4000 metres elevation.

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

This day we use if there is difficulty during trek from Pho to Shilenchaur Kharka. If not then we detour to Mugu

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village. Great Himalaya Trail heads south from here, but we turn north (on the good trail) to Mugu which is about 3 hours away. There's a chance of encountering other trekkers on this trail. Arriving at Mugu (3400m), we set up camp on the broad, flat valley floor immediately below the village.

Day 22: Shilenchaur KharkaTrek to Pulu or Riusa (2250m) 7-8 hours.

We have 3 days to trek to the airport at Talcha just to the east of Rara Lake and for the whole of this journey we will be on reasonably good trails that link the villages in the valley of the Mugu Karnali. On this first day we descend steadily to the confluence of the Mugu with the NamlangNadi at Tyar and continue westwards for a further hour or two to a camping place beside the river below one of two villages, either Pulu or a little further on, Riusa.

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

Another longish day in terms of distance but no big climbs, just 'Nepali undulation' beside the river. Again, there are lots of great views and we'll have plenty of opportunity to interact with the local people that we meet on the trail. We pass through the striking settlement of Mangri which sits amongst its terraced fields on a bench above the south side of the river. Now heading in a south-westerly direction, we continue beside the Mugu Karnali through the village of Chhaila to a camping place close to the houses of Kumpha (2010m).

Day 24: Kumpha to Talcha Airport (2750m) 7 hours.

We'll have an early start on this final day of trekking and aim to reach the busy little town of Gamgadhi in time for lunch at a lodge. After lunch, there's a steady climb up to the airfield at Talcha where we set up our final camp. There are few facilities here, but there is a good view north-eastwards to the peaks above Mugu.

Day 25: Fly from Talcha to Nepalgunj and Kathmandu.

The early morning flight takes us out of the cool, fresh mountains of Dolpo and into the hot and humid Terrai region at Nepalgunj. This time, however, it is a short stop and we soon connect with our flight to Kathmandu, where we check into our hotel. Time now for a cleanup and a look in the mirror (if you dare). This evening we have to get used to some fine dining and the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu's busy streets.

Day 26: A free day in Kathmandu which can also be used as contingency.

This is a contingency day in case of problems with the weather-dependent flight out of Talcha. If we have flown on schedule this will be a day to relax and enjoy the delights of Kathmandu.

Day 27: Departure day-Fly back to home

Our staff transfer you to Tribhuvan International airport.