



Upper Dolpo

Trip Facts

Difficulty Difficult to Strenuous	Max Altitude 5,115m/16,781ft	Accommodation Standard Hotels (Kathmandu & Nepalgunj) & basic Local Teahouses and fully serviced wilderness camping	Meals
Activity Off the Beaten trail	Best Season Monsoon (Jun -Sept)due to rain-shadow traits & Spring (Mar–May)	Start / End Point Domestic flight from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj, followed by a mountain connection flight to Juphal.	Duration 22-24 Days

Trip Overview

The Upper Dolpo Trek is Nepal's ultimate hidden wilderness expedition, located in the remote northwest rain-shadow of the Dhaulagiri massif. Protected entirely within Shey Phoksundo National Park—Nepal's largest national park—this vast, high-altitude desert is heavily celebrated as a pristine repository of ancient Tibetan culture and raw wilderness. It stands as an elite destination reserved for seasoned explorers looking to completely escape mass tourism. This forbidden landscape requires a specialized Restricted Area Permit (RAP) and a minimum of two travelers plus a licensed guide, making solo trekking strictly illegal.

Spanning a flexible 22-to-26-day timeframe, Upper Dolpo features a stark, windswept landscape that transitions from deep river canyons to multiple high-altitude mountain passes like Kang La (5,350m), Saldang La (5,200m), and Numa La (5,115m). These demanding alpine crossings reward your physical stamina with boundless, staggering views that stretch endlessly into the Tibetan plateau. The region's approach treats hikers to the hypnotic, crystal-clear turquoise waters of Phoksundo Lake (3,611m). Surrounded by vertical rock cliffs, this deep-blue alpine water basin contains no aquatic life, allowing it to act as a flawless mirror for the surrounding peaks.

The ultimate destination of this frontier journey is the mythical Shey Gompa (4,343m) at the base of the sacred Crystal Mountain. Built in the 11th century, this region serves as the global heartland of the ancient pre-Buddhist Bon-Po cultural traditions, where centuries-old nomadic lifestyles remain entirely frozen in time. Because the region is so isolated and sparsely populated, the natural ecosystem remains completely intact. The arid cliffs and deep granite gorges serve as one of the world's most critical sanctuaries for the endangered Snow Leopard, alongside herds of Himalayan Blue Sheep, Musk Deer, and Tibetan Wolves.

Because it sits in a rain-shadow zone, Upper Dolpo is one of the few regions in Nepal ideal for summer and monsoon trekking (June to September), remaining dry when the rest of the country experiences heavy rains. The entire circuit loop requires a 100% fully self-sufficient camping setup. Himal Trek Nepal completely manages your experience. We secure your specialized



government RAPs, coordinate your complex internal flights to the Juphal airstrip via Nepalgunj, handle full camping kitchen logistics, and pair your group with elite, licensed local guides equipped with advanced high-altitude rescue tools.

Trip Itinerary

Day 01 - Arrival in Kathmandu & Transfer to Hotel

Difficulty	Max altitude 1,400m/4,593ft	Accommodation Premium Boutique Hotel in Thamel	Meals
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Day 02 - Kathmandu Sightseeing, Trek Briefing & Permit Processing

Difficulty	Max altitude 1,400m/4,593ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 03 - Flight from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj

Difficulty	Max altitude 1,400m/4,593ft	Accommodation City Hotel in Nepalgunj	Meals
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Day 04 - Flight from Nepalgunj to Juphal & Trek to Dunai

Difficulty 35-minute flight 3 to 4 hours hike	Max altitude 2,475m/8,120ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 05 - Trek from Dunai to Chhekpa

Difficulty 5 to 6 hours hiking	Max altitude 2,830m/9,285ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 06 - Trek from Chhekpa to Amchi Hospital (Jharana Hotel)

Difficulty 5 to 6 hours hiking	Max altitude 3,110m/10,203ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 07 - Trek from Amchi Hospital to Ringmo Village (Phoksundo Lake)

Difficulty 4 to 5 hours hiking	Max altitude 3,611m/11,847ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 08 - Rest & Acclimatization Day at Phoksundo Lake

Difficulty	Max altitude 3,611m/11,847ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 09 - Trek from Phoksundo Lake to Phoksundo Khola (The Lake Forest Camp)

Difficulty 5 to 6 hours hiking	Max altitude 3,630m/11,909ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 10 - Trek from Phoksundo Khola to Phoksundo Bhanjyang (Lar Tsa)

Difficulty 6 to 7 hours hiking	Max altitude 4,400m/14,436ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 11 - Cross Kang La Pass & Trek to Shey Gompa

Difficulty 7 to 9 hours hiking	Max altitude 5,350m/17,552ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 12 - Rest & Spiritual Exploration Day at Shey Gompa

Difficulty	Max altitude 4,343m/14,249ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 13 - Trek from Shey Gompa to Saldang via Saldang La Pass

Difficulty 6 to 7 hours hiking	Max altitude 5,200m/17,060ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 14 - Trek from Saldang to Yangze Gompa

Difficulty 4 to 5 hours hiking	Max altitude 3,890m/12,762ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 15 - Trek from Yangze Gompa to Sibu

Difficulty 6 to 7 hours hiking	Max altitude 4,560m/14,961ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 16 - Trek from Sibu to Jeng La Base Camp (Tokyu)

Difficulty 5 to 6 hours hiking	Max altitude 4,560m/14,961ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 17 - Cross Jeng La Pass & Trek to Dho Tarap

Difficulty 6 to 8 hours hiking	Max altitude 5,090m/16,699ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 18 - Rest & Cultural Day in Dho Tarap

Difficulty	Max altitude 3,945m/12,943ft	Accommodation	Meals
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Day 19 - Trek from Dho Tarap to Numa La Base Camp

Difficulty	Max altitude	Accommodation	Meals
4 to 5 hours hiking	4,440m/14,567ft		

Day 20 - Cross Numa La Pass & Trek to Pelung Tang

Difficulty	Max altitude	Accommodation	Meals
6 to 8 hours hiking	5,115m/16,781ft		

Day 21 - Trek from Pelung Tang to Dho/Dunai Trail (Dho Khola)

Difficulty	Max altitude	Accommodation	Meals
6 to 7 hours hiking	4,465m/14,649ft		

Day 22 - Trek back from Dho Khola to Juphal

Difficulty	Max altitude	Accommodation	Meals
4 to 5 hours hiking	2,475m/8,120ft		

Day 23 - Fly from Juphal to Nepalgunj & Connecting Flight to Kathmandu

Difficulty	Max altitude	Accommodation	Meals
	2,475m/8,120ft		

Day 24 - Final International Departure

Difficulty	Max altitude	Accommodation	Meals
	1,400m/4,593ft		

Cost Includes & Excludes

Includes:

- 3 nights accommodations during Kathmandu stay in twin sharing basis.
- 1 night accommodation during Nepalgunj stay in twin sharing basis.
- All Domestic Airfare: Round-trip flights from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj, and the connecting mountain flights from Nepalgunj to Juphal Airstrip (including airport departure taxes).
- Required Permits & Fees: 1. Restricted Area Permit (RAP) in Upper Dolpo of US\$500 for 10 days and US\$50 per day for other rest days. 2. Shey Phoksundo National Park Permit. 3. TIMS (Trekking Information Management Systems) card if applicable.
- Accommodation Along the Trail: 1. 100% Serviced Wilderness Camping: 19 nights of fully self-sufficient camping using premium, weather-resistant mountain tents, foam mattresses, warm dining tents with tables/chairs, and private toilet tents.
- Trekking Support Staff: 1. Salary, insurance, food, accommodation, and equipment for a licensed English-speaking guide. 2. Salary, insurance, food, and accommodation for porters (typically 1 porter shared between 2 trekkers, carrying up to 20–25kg total).
- Meals on the Trek: 1. Full board meals: 3 meals a day (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner). 2. Post-dinner hot beverages (tea or coffee) or a cup of hot water.
- Safety Gear: 1. First-aid kit carried by the guide, including an oximeter to monitor oxygen levels daily.



- Expedition Crew: A dedicated team of professional camp cooks, kitchen assistants, and fairly compensated local porters to transport main luggage.
- All Government Taxes

Excludes:

- International Travel Costs: 1. International airfare to and from Kathmandu. 2. Nepal Tourist Visa fee (payable in cash USD upon arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport).
- Single supplementary fee
- Travel and Emergency Insurance: 1. Mandatory: Travel insurance that explicitly covers emergency helicopter evacuation up to 5,500 meters (most basic plans cap out at 3,000m).
- Meals before & after trek in Kathmandu & extra stay in Kathmandu hotels other than mentioned above: 1. Hotel up-gradation might cost extra depending on your request.
- Trail Luxuries & Services (Tea house Add-on): 1. Hot Showers: Gas or solar-heated showers cost between \$3 to \$7 USD per shower (prices increase with altitude). 2. Device Charging: Power banks, phones, and camera battery charging cost \$2 to \$5 USD per full charge. 3. Wi-Fi / Connectivity: AirLED or Everest Link Wi-Fi prepaid cards cost roughly \$5 to \$10 USD for a set amount of data. 4. Drinking Water: Bottled water costs \$1 to \$4 USD per bottle (it is highly recommended to bring water purification tablets/filters instead).
- Personal Trekking Gear: 1. Down jackets, sleeping bags, hiking boots, trekking poles, and backpacks (though sleeping bags and jackets can be rented cheaply in Kathmandu for around \$1 to \$2 a day).
- Beverages & Snacks: 1. Alcoholic drinks (beer, spirits), specialty coffees, soft drinks, and bakery items or trail cafes.
- Tips & Gratitude: 1. Tipping guides and porters is custom and highly expected. The industry standard is roughly 10% to 15% of your total trek cost, pooled together by the group and handed out on the final evening.

FAQs

Strict Restricted Area Rules

Solo trekking is completely illegal here; the government requires a minimum of two trekkers per group accompanied by a licensed guide

Mandatory Guide Policy

Himal Trek Nepal provides government-licensed, elite local guides essential for navigating the unmarked, rugged trails of the wild west.

All Permits Handled

We manage all bureaucracy, acquiring your specialized Department of Immigration Restricted Area Permit (RAP) and the Shey Phoksundo National Park Permit.

Permit Cost Structure

Upper Dolpo permits cost a premium USD \$500 per person for the first 10 days and \$50 per day thereafter, which we bundle entirely into your booking package.

Best Trekking Seasons

Unlike most of Nepal, June to September (Monsoon) is an ideal time to visit because Dolpo sits in a rain-shadow zone and stays completely dry.

Trailhead Access Logistics

We manage your internal transport, including four separate domestic flights (Kathmandu to Nepalgunj round-trip, then connecting flights to Juphal) bundled into your itinerary.

Expedition Style Support



Due to the severe terrain, we provide a comprehensive team of porters, camp cooks, and kitchen staff to carry and prepare all supplies.

Wilderness Camping

Lower Dolpo offers a few basic teahouses, but Upper Dolpo requires 100% fully self-sufficient wilderness tent camping managed by our crew.

Connectivity & Wi-Fi

Expect to be completely offline for weeks; cellular networks and internet are non-existent past Nepalgunj, though our guides carry satellite backup.

Power & Charging

Power relies heavily on local solar grids; charging is highly limited or unavailable at upper camps, making high-capacity, cold-resistant power banks mandatory.

Safe Drinking Water

Our team provides fully boiled and purified water daily; maintaining strict hygiene is our top priority in this isolated wilderness area.

Two Distinct Circuits

We offer both the shorter, strenuous Lower Dolpo Circuit (14–18 Days) or the extreme, high-endurance Upper Dolpo Grand Expedition (22–26 Days).

High Altitude Passes

Prepare to conquer multiple windswept mountain barriers, including Kang La Pass (5,350m), Numa La (5,115m), and Baga La (5,070m).

Trek Difficulty Level

Dolpo is rated strenuous to extreme; it requires previous high-altitude trekking experience, excellent stamina, and superb physical conditioning.

Altitude Sickness Mitigation

With prolonged stays above 4,000 meters, our guides employ strict pacing and use pulse oximeters daily to monitor your oxygen levels.

Mandatory Travel Insurance

Your insurance policy must explicitly cover emergency helicopter evacuation up to 6,000 meters with special remote region clearance.

Essential Packing List

Pack a -20°C rated sleeping bag, a professional alpine down jacket, robust broken-in boots, and alpine-grade UV sunglasses to combat glacial glare.