

Earthbound Expeditions

Upper Dolpo Trek – “The Caravan Trek” Nepal

22 days, from US$3,187 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
22 days	**15 People**	**Nepal**

Upper Dolpo Trek - “The Caravan Trek” Nepal Overview

Discover untouched landscapes and Tibetan traditions on the Upper Dolpo Trek in Nepal. Experience a journey like no other - book today!

The high and isolated valley of Dolpo in northern Nepal preserves some of the Himalayas’ last remnants of traditional Tibetan culture. According to legends, the Guru Rinpochhe created Dolpo as a sanctuary for devout Buddhists and it was only opened to trekkers in 1990. It was forbidden land for many years. This remote western region of Nepal, runs parallel to the image of the “Shangri-la” of Bhutan in many aspects. One has to see the landscapes in all of its rugged natural beauty and experience the remoteness to understand Dolpo. The nature and culture of upper Dolpo is very rich, colorful and almost beyond measure.

Upper Dolpo Circuit: An Overview

Cut off from the world by high mountains and snow-covered passes, Dolpo is the home to about 5000 people whose lives are centered on Buddhism and traditional agricultural practices. It's an explorer's paradise- the distinctive people, their lifestyle and the remarkable wildlife.

The trek follows the ancient Tibetan salt caravan route, crossing two high passes and through the wilderness in one of Nepal’s most remote areas. It's a challenge, but the untouched villages, beautiful glaciers, the hidden valleys and the spiritual air of the region, makes this trek worth every minute of the hard work you put into it.

Highlights of Upper Dolpo Tour

- Mesmerizing deep blue and emerald Phoksundo's freshwater lake.
- Ancient Shey Gomp monastery and Crystal Mountain.
- Glimpse into Tibetan-influenced culture in villages like Roha, Renje, and Dho Tarap.
- Challenging passes like Numa La and Baga La with panoramic mountain views.
- The culturally rich Tarap valley, blending Tibetan Buddhism and Bon Po traditions.
- Home to Diverse Flora and Fauna including snow leopards, blue sheep, and unique vegetation in Shey Phoksundo National Park.
- Ancient monasteries and spiritual landmarks dotting the trekking route.
- Vast, arid landscapes of the high-altitude Tibetan plateau.
- Engagements with warm, traditional locals.
- Aerial views of terraced fields, rivers, and peaks from Kathmandu to Jhupal.

Cost of Upper Dolpo Trip

This luxury tour costs $3,187 per person.

Brief Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Kathmandu

Day 2: Sightseeing Tour in Kathmandu Valley

Day 3: Fly to Nepalgun

DAY 4: Fly to Jhupal and then Trek to Dunai

Day 5: Dunai to Roha

Day 6: Ankhe to Renje (3104 m)

Day 7: Renje to Phoksundo Lake (3600m)

Day 8: Excursion to Phoksundo Lake

Day 9: Phoksundo Lake to Baga La Phedi (4750m)

Day 10: Baga La Phedi - Poyon Khola

Day 11: Poyon Khola - Shering Gompa (4150m) via south Numa La (5190m)

DAY 12: Shering Gompa - Dho Tarap (4030m)

Day 13: Exploration around Dho Tarap

Day 14: Dho Tarap to Tarap Khola (4,000m)

DAY 15: Tarap Khola to Lahini (3200m)

Day 16: Lahini to Khani Gaon (2950m)

Day 17: Khani Gaon to Tarakot (2500m)

Day 18: Tarakot to Dunai (2150m)

Day 19: Dunai to Juphal

Day 20: Fly Juphal - Nepalgunj – Kathmandu

Day 21: Exploration Day

Day 22: Final Departure

This trek is very raw and unique, unlike the popular and little more crowded trekking routes like in the Everest region and Annapurna region.

Cost Includes/ Excludes

Includes

- Accommodation in a (3) three starred hotels in the cities but for the duration of the trek only simple lodges or camping are available.
- Ground transportations provided.
- Sightseeing in Kathmandu where Earthbound Expeditions city tour guide will accompany you.
- Full board meals will be provided throughout the trek.
- Government trained guides and needed no. of porters with their insurance, salary and meals will be provided.
- Farewell dinner along with one cultural show.
- Special entry permit and entry fees and TIMS permit will be provided.
- Domestic Flights will be booked according to the Itinerary listed.
- Sleeping bags and down jackets for trek will be provided.
- Car / Bus / Domestic Flights included.

Itinerary

> **Day 1**
>
> ### Arrival in Kathmandu
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> After you arrive at Kathmandu, you'll be greeted by one of our representatives at the airport. You will then be transported to your hotel, where you'll be resting for a while. We meet again in the evening for the Dolpo Trek short briefing. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 2

Sightseeing Tour in Kathmandu Valley

Today, for the entire day, you'll be touring the significant UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Kathmandu Valley. You'll be visiting Pashupatinath - a pilgrimage for Hindus where you can watch as the Hindu dead bodies are cremated most uniquely in the world, Swayambhunath - an ancient Buddhist Stupa in Kathmandu Valley (also known as Monkey Temple), Boudhanath, one of the biggest Buddhist temple in the world, and the Patan Durbar Square- a Medieval Royal Palace area that showcases fantastic Nepali Architecture. Overnight at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Day 3

Fly to Nepalgunj

After breakfast in Kathmandu, we drive to the airport and fly about an hour and a half to Nepalgunj. The rest of the day will be spent visiting the town situated near the border of Nepal and India. Overnight at Nepalgunj hotel.

Day 4

Fly to Jhupal and then Trek to Dunai

Today, we take a flight to Juphal early in the morning over the Himalayan foothills, relishing the fantastic views of Annapurna and Dhaulagiri peaks to the north. Upon our arrival at Juphal, we will be greeted by our trekking crew who will be assisting us throughout the journey. We officially begin our trekking from Jhupal heading towards Dunai. After our initial descent down the village, we stroll through the terraced fields and to the Bheri River. We eventually reach Dunai after passing the narrow gorge. In the evening, we explore this beautiful town and set up camp for the night. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 5

Dunai to Roha

From Dunai, we first cross a suspension bridge and follow the main trail along the river. After crossing the gazing meadows and fields, we reach Hanke village, the gateway to hike at Phoksundo National Park. Slowly, passing through the Parel village, we reach today’s destination Roha Gaun. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 6

Ankhe to Renje (3104 m)

After breakfast, we begin the day following the frantic trail and reach Ankhe from where we head to the river bed and cross the suspension bridge. Strolling further through the narrow path and the massive rock cliffs, we descend to the river and then ascend on a steep trail to reach Renje. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 7

Renje to Phoksundo Lake (3600m)

The trail, initially easy, becomes exciting from Sumdo above the river. As we climb up to the curve, we get to enjoy captivating panoramas of the dry landscapes and also the cascading waterfall. We hike down steadily through the forest to Phoksundo Khola near the Ringmo village. Once we reach Phoksundo Lake, we walk around a while and enjoy and then set up a camp for the night. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 8

Excursion to Phoksundo Lake

Today we explore around the pristine Phoksundo Lake, the deepest in Nepal. Encircled by Tibetan Buddhist settlements, this beautiful alpine turquoise colored freshwater lake, adds even more beauty to the place. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 9

Phoksundo Lake to Baga La Phedi (4750m)

Today, we again continue our journey heading towards the Baga La Phedi. We cross several streams, remote and glacial valleys through the narrow trail with massive cliffs before we get to the Phoksundo Khola. Trailing forward through up and down the steep path and monasteries, we reach Baga La Phedi at an altitude of 4,750 meters. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 10

Baga La Phedi - Poyon Khola

After breakfast in Baga La Phedi, we trail forward, up and down, crossing the beautiful Baga La pass to get Poyon Khola. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 11

Poyon Khola - Shering Gompa (4150m) via south Numa La (5190m)

After breakfast in Poyon Khola, we head towards Shering Gompa hiking on a steep trail. Crossing the Numa La pass, at an elevation of 5190 meters, with spectacular views over the snow capped Himalayas is an unbelievable experience you will get on this voyage. Today, we stop at Shering Gompa overnight.

Day 12

Shering Gompa - Dho Tarap (4030m)

Today, we descend towards one of the most beautiful Tibetan Buddhist's settlement, Dho Tarap. We walk through moderate trails crossing the animal herds and gaming fields witnessing the unique lifestyle of local people along the way. Once we reach Dho Tarap, we set up our camp where we rest for the night.

Day 13

Exploration around Dho Tarap

We spend our day acclimatizing at Dho Tarap, hiking around the village to explore the picturesque setting and culture of Tibetan Buddhism. The Buddhist Gompa near the camp and the Bon Gompa (pre-Buddhist) about half an hour far are the must-see attractions. In the late afternoon, we get back to our place and rest. Overnight at tented camp.

Day 14

Dho Tarap to Tarap Khola (4,000m)

From Tarap, today we trek down towards a broad valley which in due course narrows into a gorge. While hiking along juniper and wild rose bushes, we might witness herds of blue sheep. By the afternoon, we reach the junction of the Tarap Chu and a rivulet that connects with Tarap River from further east, the Lang Khola. Eventually, we arrive at Tarap Khola where we set our camp on a beautiful meadow for the night.

Day 15

Tarap Khola to Lahini (3200m)

After breakfast, we continue walking down the gorge of Tarap Khola. As we move through the valley, the trail leads to a deep gorge. Eventually, we reach Lahini where we set the camp and rest for the night.

Day 16

Lahini to Khani Gaon (2950m)

Today, we walk alongside the Tarap River to Khani Gaon. As the gorge becomes narrower, we'll be jumping from one side to another. Once we reach Khani Gaon, we camp beside the Tarap Khola and rest for the night.

Day 17

Khani Gaon to Tarakot (2500m)

After early breakfast, we depart from the Tarap Chu River and hike towards Bheri River gorge downstream by crossing several bridges and the same river twice. The trail leads us through terraced farmland and rural villages of Kola and winds gradually towards a settlement of Sahartera. From here, we head further down along the stream and reach our overnight camp at Tarakot. In Tarakot, we can visit a beautiful monastery, Sandul Gompa which stands on a hill to the south of Bheri River.

Day 18

Tarakot to Dunai (2150m)

After breakfast in Tarakot, we embark on our trek on a trail behind the Bheri River and slowly cross a bridge near the Lawan village. The path will continue alongside the gigantic Bheri River ascending until the Byas Gadi from where we move towards the west on a relatively easy trail. We cross the river near the Lochakhola Gaon and then climb to Dunai. Overnight in Dunai.

Day 19

Dunai to Juphal

From Dunai, we continue the trek alongside the Bheri River relishing the beautiful landscape and natural wonders for the last time. We pass through Dhupichaur and Rupgad villages as well as a temple as we continue our trek towards Juphal via Kalagaonda and Motipur community before reaching the small airstrip. Overnight in Jhuphal.

Day 20

Fly Juphal - Nepalgunj - Kathmandu

Today, we take a scenic flight to Nepalgunj and from there, we fly back to Kathmandu. After landing, you will be transferred to your hotel. Relax and enjoy the rest of your day. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 21

Exploration Day

After breakfast, we go sightseeing at Bhaktapur Durbar Square, go shopping in Thamel. In the evening, we'll have a farewell dinner together. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 22

Final Departure

Our team will drop you at the International airport 2-3 hours before your flight schedule.

What's included

- Accommodation in a (3) three starred hotels in the cities but for the duration of the trek only simple lodges or camping are available.
- Ground transportations provided.
- Sightseeing in Kathmandu where Earthbound Expeditions city tour guide will accompany you.
- Full board meals will be provided throughout the trek.
- Government trained guides and needed no. of porters with their insurance, salary and meals will be provided.
- Farewell dinner along with one cultural show.
- Special entry permit and entry fees and TIMS permit will be provided.
- Domestic Flights will be booked according to the Itinerary listed.
- Sleeping bags and down jackets for trek will be provided.
- Car / Bus / Domestic Flights included.

Not included

- International Flight tickets.
- Museums entrance fees.
- All personal expenses such as bar bills, beverage, snacks etc
- Airport tax.
- Extra shower, battery recharge, laundry charge etc.
- Personal clothing and gears.
- Tips to guides and porters.
- Costs raised by cancellation, landslide, weather, political unrest, illness will not be our responsibility since these factors are not within our grasp.

Upper Dolpo Trek Difficulty

Upper Dolpo trekking is a strenuous and lengthy camping trek in Nepal. You'll be crossing several passes above 5000 m., and spending several nights at elevations above 3500 m. The entire trail goes up and down steep hills, through narrow gorges, and you will need to walk several kilometers for 6 to 8 hours per day. Beginners and first time trekkers are not recommended to embark on this trek.

Meal and Accommodation during Upper Dolpo Trek

Upper Dolpo, in Nepal, offers a rustic trekking experience due to its remote location. Meals primarily consist of traditional Nepali and Tibetan dishes like 'dal bhat', momo, and thukpa. Accommodation is basic, with most treks being camping-based. There are a few simple teahouses and the option for homestays in certain villages. Trekkers should be self-sufficient, prepared for cold temperatures, and respectful of local customs. While facilities are basic, the region's authentic culture and scenic beauty provide a unique and enriching experience.

Upper dolpo Trek Guide

Before your Upper Dolpo Trek, here are a few things for you to know:

Best time to trek Upper Dolpo

The best time to trek Upper Dolpo is during the spring (late April to early June) and autumn (late September to early November) seasons:

Spring offers moderate temperatures and blossoming flora, making the landscapes particularly vibrant and beautiful. However, late spring might see some pre-monsoon showers.

The monsoon rains clear the sky and reduce dust, offering crisp views of the landscapes during the autumn. Temperatures are cool but comfortable, making it one of the best times to experience the region's beauty.

During the monsoon season (June to early September), Upper Dolpo receives less rainfall than many other regions in Nepal because it lies in the rain shadow of the Himalayas. However, there can still be occasional rains, landslides, and flight delays due to unpredictable weather, making it less ideal for trekking.

Winter (late November to March) is not a recommended time due to heavy snowfall and extremely cold temperatures, which can make many passes and routes inaccessible.

Packing List for Upper Dolpo Trek

Your luggage should weigh between 10-15 kg which includes your daypack as well. The porters will be carrying your luggage while you'll be carrying your daypack.

Clothes

- Warm beanie hat
- Headwear, sun hat or cap
- Light thermal tops and trousers
- Trekking shirts
- Fleece jacket or pullover
- Breathable waterproof jacket
- Down jacket
- Trekking pants
- Fleece pants
- Windproof hiking trousers
- Waterproof pants
- Hiking pants
- Toiletries
- Liner gloves
- Waterproof outer gloves
- Warm trekking socks
- Liner socks
- Warm, wool socks
- Waterproof trekking
- Trainers and sandals to wear at teahouses

Equipments

- Daypack

- Water bottle
- Large duffle bag
- Polarized sunglasses with UV protection
- Headlamp with spare batteries
- Sunscreen with factor 30+
- Adjustable trekking pole
- Sleeping bag and liner
- Portable solar charger
- Water purification tablets
- Small Swiss army knife
- Blister and sewing kit
- Hand sanitizer
- First-aid kit with personal medications

Permits and Requirements for Upper Dolpo trek

For this trek, you'll need the Lower Dolpo Restricted Area Entry Permit, Shey-Phoksundo National Park Permit, and a TIMS card.

Travel Insurance for Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek

When preparing for the Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek, it's vital to secure comprehensive travel insurance that covers high altitude trekking above 5,000 meters, includes helicopter emergency evacuation, provides broad medical coverage, and accounts for trip cancellations or interruptions. Ensure the policy also compensates for lost or damaged baggage, potential flight delays, and offers 24/7 emergency assistance.

Road and Transportation during Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek

The cities and towns have decent roads with occasional rough patches along the way. The flights to Nepalgunj and Jhupal are short and dependent on weather conditions. From Jhupal, the entirety of the trek is on foot, traversing rugged and traditional trekking trails without vehicular roads. These paths might occasionally be used by locals with mules or yaks. The trek navigates through diverse terrains, from the lower altitudes of Dunai and Tarakot to high-altitude areas like Baga La Phedi and Numa La.

Health & Fitness requirement for Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek

For this trek, you'll need to have a decent level of fitness. Consistent aerobic exercises like jogging or cycling can help build endurance, while strength training, focusing on legs, core, and upper body, helps you to navigate the rugged terrain, steep ascents, and descents. Flexibility, gained through regular stretching or yoga, helps prevent injuries, while prior experience in high-altitude treks or using altitude training aids can provide a preliminary acclimatization advantage. Mental preparedness is just as essential, given the unpredictable weather, difficult terrain, and potential altitude sickness.

Facilities available during the Upper Dolpo Circuit Camp

You'll be staying in 3 star hotels in Kathmandu and Nepalgunj. Given the remote nature of this trek, your accommodation will be set up in camps.

Electricity and Charging Options in Upper Dolpo Trek

This is a predominantly camping-based trek so you can't rely on the sparse village electricity sources and instead must depend on portable solutions. Be sure to carry portable solar chargers, power banks and fully-charged spare batteries.

Upper Dolpo Trek: Internet, Network & Wifi availability

The Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek, situated in one of Nepal's most remote regions, offers limited modern communication amenities. While areas like Jhupal might provide some mobile network coverage, primarily through Nepal Telecom (NTC) and Ncell, connectivity fades as you delve deeper into Upper Dolpo. Few larger villages might sporadically offer basic Internet or Wi-Fi in teahouses, but such services are rare and often unreliable. Your guide will have satellite phones for emergencies, given the scarcity of regular network coverage.

Rooms, Bathrooms & Toilets in the Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek

On the predominantly camping-based Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek, you can expect fundamental and rustic accommodation and sanitary conditions. Sleeping arrangements are primarily in tents, designed for mountain conditions. Bathrooms, when camping, are rudimentary with designated areas set away from campsites and perhaps makeshift shower areas with buckets. Warm water showers are rare and not to be expected frequently. The toilet facilities on the trek range from pit latrines to toilet tents that are set up by the guides.

Conclusion

The Upper Dolpo Circuit Trek invites adventurers to step into a land untouched by time, offering an unparalleled trekking experience amidst Nepal's remote and rugged beauty. It's a journey of resilience as you disconnect from the digital realm- a deep dive into indigenous culture, and breathtaking landscapes that few have witnessed.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/dolpo-trek-the-caravan-trek-nepal