

Nepal: Lodge to Lodge Hiking in Upper Mustang

SACRED SKY CAVES, LO MANTHANG AND THE ANNUAL TIJI FESTIVAL



TRIP DATES

2024

April 28-May 13, 2024

2025

May 18-June 2, 2025



Wilderness Travel

Nepal: Lodge to Lodge Hiking in Upper Mustang

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Come with us to Mustang, the once-forbidden Kingdom of Lo, isolated on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau. Officially part of Nepal since the 18th century, Mustang is actually a time capsule of ancient Tibetan heritage. This stunning high-altitude realm of medieval towns, cave shrines, ochre cliffs, and deep canyons under an infinite blue sky was once a vital part of the trade route from Tibet to Nepal and India. All that changed with the Chinese takeover of Tibet in the 1950s, when the border was sealed. Mustang was left isolated for decades, explored by just a few hardy trekkers who ventured up the Kali Gandaki gorge. We'll experience Mustang's mystical beauty on daily hikes and 4WD explorations, with overnights in simple, yet welcoming lodges. A wonderful benefit of our stays in these lodges is the opportunity for authentic cultural interactions, learning about our host families' lives: seeing them milk their yaks, churning butter, weaving yak wool, and going about the everyday chores of life in these incredibly remote Himalayan villages. In Mustang's walled capital, Lo Manthang, where the crown prince of Mustang is in residence, we'll visit 15th century monasteries where the masterpiece Buddhist wall frescoes are being restored by the local people, trained by a restoration artist from Italy with the support of the American Himalayan Foundation—an organization that Wilderness Travel contributes to. You'll meet these dedicated artists, and see this priceless cultural heritage being brought back to life. We've timed our journey for Lo Manthang's multi-day Tiji Festival, with its chanting monks, clanging cymbals, and leaping masked dancers—an incredibly colorful event. On our day hikes and 4WD travels, we'll explore whitewashed cliff villages and eerie cave complexes—the “meditation sky caves”—surrounded by Mustang's otherworldly moonscape of rock chimneys and ravines flanked by majestic snow peaks. Join us to experience a high-altitude cultural and hiking adventure (with comfortable, if simple, overnights), witness a joyous Tibetan Buddhist festival, and savor an insider's experience of one of the most extraordinary places on earth.



Wilderness Travel

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Itinerary

DAY 1

KATHMANDU (4,600')

Arrive in Kathmandu, where you are met at the airport and transferred to the Hotel Yak and Yeti, our lovely accommodation with a beautiful garden. Set in Durbar Marg, the city center, it offers a tranquil oasis in Kathmandu. Flights arrive throughout the day, so the afternoon is free for independent sightseeing. Once a traditional medieval city of breathtaking Newari architecture, Kathmandu is now a busy urban capital. One still finds magic here, especially in the ancient, narrow streets and in countless temples and shrines where Buddhist and Hindu iconography mix in fascinating ways. This evening, we will meet for our trip orientation with your Trip Leader...meals on your own

DAY 2

KATHMANDU

We enjoy a half-day walking tour to discover some of the city's fascinating sites, including Asan Bazaar, with its narrow, bustling lanes, and Durbar Square, a showcase of Newari palace architecture. In the evening, we gather for our festive Welcome Dinner. Overnight at the Hotel Yak and Yeti...BLD

DAY 3

POKHARA

On our morning flight to Pokhara, set on the shores of Phewa Tal, Nepal's largest lake, we'll have commanding views of the Himalayas, which rises from this subtropical valley to the icy summits of the highest peaks on earth. Pokhara is the trekking hub for the Annapurna region, and, if the skies are clear, we'll see the fishtail of sacred Machapuchare peak, forbidden to climbers. After lunch, we'll visit the International Mountain Museum, dedicated to the sport of climbing as well as the ancient cultures of the Himalayan people. We'll also explore the lakeside shops and temples. Overnight at the Hotel Barahi, set in the Lakeside district. The Barahi offers modern, air-conditioned guest rooms with balconies as well as a garden, swimming pool, and restaurant serving international and local cuisine. Dinner is on your own tonight. Your Trip Leader can provide suggestions among the wide range of lakeside options, or you can enjoy dinner at Hotel Barahi's restaurant...BL

DAY 4

JOMSOM / MARPHA (8,793')

A breathtaking 30-minute morning flight through the world's deepest gorge, the Kali Gandaki, brings us to Jomsom, with the 26,247-foot giants of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna towering on either side. At the airstrip, we are met by our crew and jeeps for a drive to the village of Marpha, nestled beneath towering cliffs (or you can hike instead—about 2 hours). Marpha is a historic Thakali village that was once a very important stop on the Nepal-Tibet trade route. The Thakalis, inhabitants of the Thak Khola (Kali Gandaki river valley), are very rich in culture and tradition and are one of the major indigenous tribes of Nepal. In the afternoon, we'll explore the village—its temples, apple orchards, and brewery. Overnight at Paradise Guest House in private rooms with attached bath...BLD



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 16 days
Arrive: Kathmandu, Nepal
Depart: Kathmandu, Nepal
Lodging: 11 nights basic lodges, 4 nights hotels
Meals: All meals included except 2 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity: Cultural Adventures, Hiking / Trekking, Walking
Trip Level: 1 2 3 ④ 5 6
Moderate to strenuous hikes, 2-7 hours a day on high mountain trails, altitudes between 9,000-13,678 feet, 4WD travel, cultural exploration

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the authentic Tibetan culture of Mustang, once a forbidden kingdom
- Witness the colorful Tiji Festival in Lo Manthang, Mustang's walled capital
- See the extraordinary 15th century murals now being restored in Mustang's monasteries
- Stay in village lodges in Mustang, enjoying wonderful cultural encounters

Itinerary (cont'd)

DAY 5

JARKHOT (11,545')

A drive of about 3.5 hours brings us to our accommodation just outside the village of Jharkot, set on edge of the Tibetan Plateau and straddling the border between Lower Mustang and Upper Mustang. Along the way, we stop to visit Lubra Bon Monastery and settlement, the only Bon settlement in Mustang. Local traditions have been well maintained in Lubra, and the monastery holds unique wall murals and statues. We'll have the afternoon to explore Jharkot, once the seat of great power. Remains include a large palace; there is also a gompa and healing center, where ancient treatment methods and medications are still in use. Overnight at a basic lodge, shared with other travelers. While we are in Mustang, our own cook staff will accompany us to prepare the hearty meals that have fueled our trekkers on many an expedition...BLD



Approximate Driving Time: 3.5 hours

Mustang Lodges: The lodges we've chosen for this trek are rustic, but are owned and operated by Mustang families, and are a wonderful way to experience local hospitality and gain an insight into the lives of the local people. Please note that due to limited space, participants may have to share a room and bathroom during certain nights on trek. There are basic toilet and washing facilities, some with Western-style toilets and some with squat-style toilets. Hot water may not be available at every lodge. We provide you with good quality sleeping bags with liners for extra comfort at all of the lodges. Our crew will be equipped with camping gear in case we need it to camp. One of the wonderful benefits of staying in these lodges is the chance to interact with local Mustang families, enjoy cultural encounters with these welcoming mountain people, see them milking their yaks, churning butter, weaving, and going about the everyday chores of traditional life in a remote Himalayan village.



DAY 6

MUKTINATH / KAGBENI / CHUSANG (10,234') / MENTSI LAKHANG CAVE-TEMPLE / TETHANG

This morning our jeeps bring us to the holy site of Muktinath, to which Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims from all over Asia have been drawn for centuries. Muktinath is one of the most venerated pilgrimage sites in the Himalaya and includes a Buddhist gompa, a Vishnu temple, and the Jwalamai temple, created around a spring with natural gas vents that create an eternal flame. The views today include panoramas across the great Kali Gandaki Gorge and the steep, ice-capped peaks that frame it. On a clear day, the 22,000-foot summits of the Nilgiri Himal dominate the skyline. After visiting Muktinath, we explore the village of Kagbeni, with its mud and stone houses and ancient alleys. Kagbeni was once a walled town and still has two entrance gates, one of which has two kheni ("ghost eater") figures protecting it, a reflection of the animism that was practiced here before Tibetan Buddhism arrived in the 11th

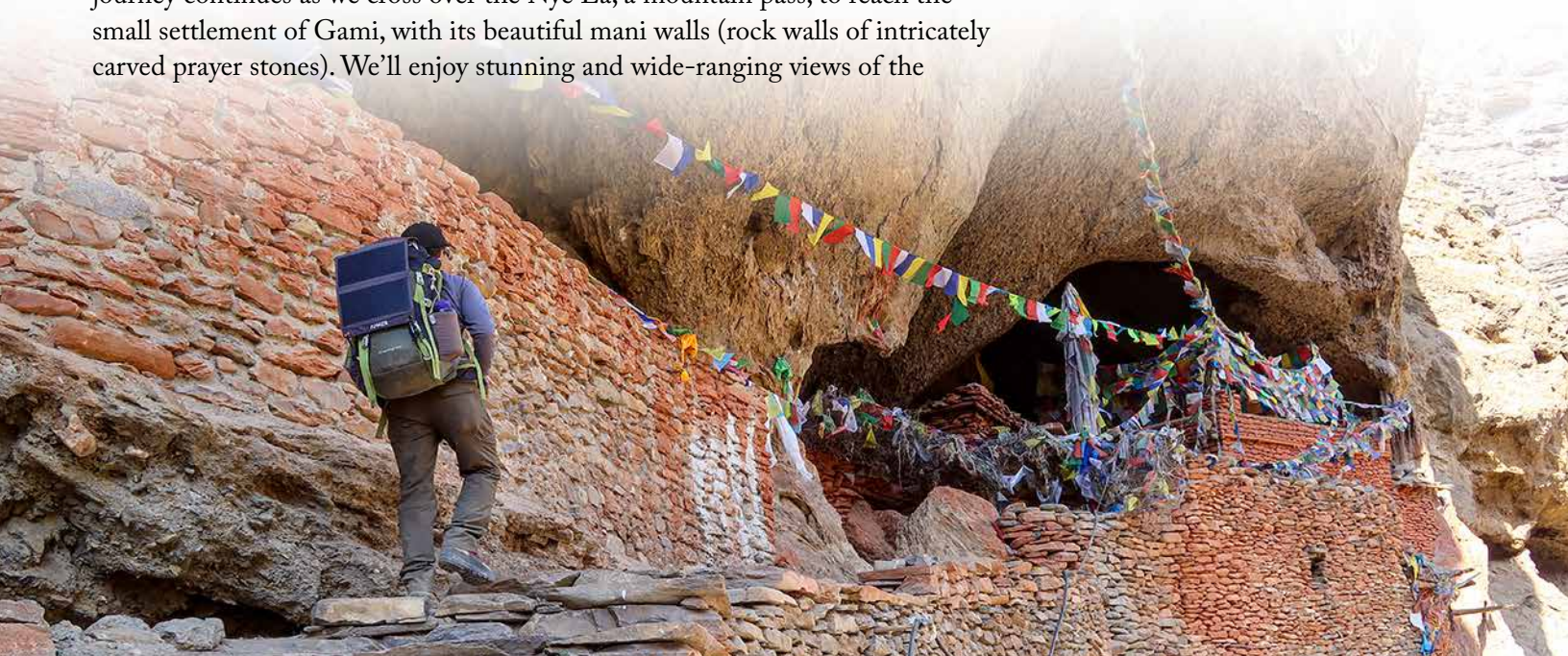
century. The centerpiece of Kagbeni is its 16th century fortress-ruins, built at the convergence of four historic trade routes. We go through formalities at the Upper Mustang checkpoint and drive the rest of the way to the village of Chusang, where we visit ancient, man-made cave-temples carved into red, orange, and silver cliffs. It is thought that Mustang's caves served as burial chambers some 3,000 years ago, then as dwellings 1,000 years ago, and later became places of Tibetan Buddhist meditation. We'll visit the cave-temple at Mentsi Lakhang as well as the wonderful fortified village of Tethang, with its medieval atmosphere. Overnight at a basic lodge in Chusang...BLD

Approximate Hiking Time: 2-3 hours total
Approximate Driving Time: 2 hours

DAY 7

CHUNGITSE RANGCHUNG CAVE-TEMPLE / NYE LA (13,153') / GAMI (11,546')

Until fairly recently, Upper Mustang was accessible only on foot, meaning long days of trekking in dry, wind-swept conditions. The new road lets us cover in hours what used to take days of hiking and gives us fantastic access to the otherworldly moonscapes of Upper Mustang and its rare Tibetan culture. Please realize, however, that the road is rough, dusty, and unpaved, but we are amply rewarded as we explore a thriving Tibetan culture in a breathtaking landscape. Heading northward, we'll take a day hike from the village of Sangmoche to the sacred Chungitse Rangchung cave-temple, where the great guru Padma Sambhava is said to have meditated. Local people and Buddhist pilgrims from afar pay their respects to this temple by walking the kora (circular trail) around it. There are several painted images within the cave that represent Guru Rimpoche, as Padma Sambhava is known in Tibetan. Guru Rimpoche was the saint who introduced Buddhism to Tibet in the 8th century. Our road journey continues as we cross over the Nye La, a mountain pass, to reach the small settlement of Gami, with its beautiful mani walls (rock walls of intricately carved prayer stones). We'll enjoy stunning and wide-ranging views of the



Itinerary (cont'd)

arid Tibetan plateau landscape and snow-capped mountains all around us. Overnight at a basic lodge in Gami...BLD

Approximate Hiking Time: 3 hours

Approximate Driving Time: 2.5 hours

DAY 8

TRAGMAR (12,530') / MUI LA (13,678') / GHAR GOMPA / LO MANTHANG (12,000')



A short drive brings us to Tragmar through a steep canyon painted in brilliant hues of red, yellow, and purple. The spectacular surroundings continue as we hike past Tragmar and over the Mui La, where the small monastery of Ghar Gompa can be seen below, surrounded by fluttering prayer flags and red chortens (shrines). We'll visit this gompa, one of the oldest Buddhist monasteries in Mustang, which has a historic connection with Guru Rimpoche. At hike's end, we are met for a drive down to fabled Lo Manthang, Mustang's walled capital. Overnight at a lodge in Lo Manthang...BLD

Approximate Hiking Time: 4-5 hours

Approximate Driving Time: 2-3 hours

DAY 9

LO MANTHANG (12,300') / THE TIJI FESTIVAL

A morning walking tour brings us through the narrow, cobbled lanes of the walled capital. We'll visit ancient monasteries and meet the local artisans who are meticulously restoring the treasury of 15th century Buddhist murals within them. Wilderness Travel supports the American Himalayan Foundation, which has spent two decades funding the mural restoration project. Restoration masters from Italy have trained over 100 local men and women, bringing back an ancient skill that once thrived here. We are proud to support this project that is turning farmers into artists and assuring a renaissance of traditional mural painting arts. In the afternoon, we witness the first processions and festivities of the annual Tiji Festival, hosted by the crown prince of Mustang and held in the courtyard of Mustang's royal palace. Nepal abolished the Mustang monarchy's official status in 2008, but Prince Jigme Singhe Palbar Bista is still revered by the local people. Overnight at lodge in Lo Manthang...BLD



The Tiji Festival: This celebration takes place at the end of May or beginning of June each year (depending on the Tibetan calendar). Masked dances, festive processions, and the sound of Tibetan horns fill the town square as the story of "the chasing of the demons" is told. Tiji celebrates the deity Dorje Jono, who battled his demon father to save Mustang from destruction. The local monks chant, perform rituals, and beat drums, the dancers whirl, and by the third day of the festival, Dorje Jono has defeated and banished the demon—good has triumphed over evil.

DAY 10

EXPLORE CAVE COMPLEXES / TIJI FESTIVAL

In the morning, we offer the option of a drive and hike to the recently discovered Konchok Ling cave, with its delicate Buddhist wall paintings and murals. The landscape of multicolored sandstone chimneys here is spectacular. We also visit the Niphu cave-temple, in active use with a monastic building in front, and the five-story Jong caves. This afternoon, we enjoy the second day of the Tiji Festival. Overnight at a lodge in Lo Manthang...BLD

Approximate Hiking Time: 3-4 hours

DAY 11

YAK PASTURE HIKE / CHARANG (11,677')

In the morning we have an option to hike up to the pastures above Lo Manthang to visit the semi nomadic yak herders and their camps. The shaggy beasts feed on the rich summer grass providing milk, butter, and hard cheese which is sold in the towns and villages. Bidding goodbye to our Lo Manthang friends, we make our way north toward the Tibetan border. Our jeeps bring us up to the Lo Dela, a mountain pass, and on a clear day, we should have wide-open views southward towards the Annapurnas and the Dhaulagiri Himal. We descend to the town of Charang, where we check into our lodge. In the afternoon, we explore Charang, the old capital of Mustang, visiting the Thubten Shedrup Monastery, with its rampart-like walls, and the Samdrup Palace, former home of Mustang's kings and now partly a museum. Overnight at lodge in Charang...BLD

Approximate Hiking Time: 3-4 hours

Approximate Driving Time: 1.5 hours

DAY 12

DHI (11,184') AND YARA (11,972')

We make our way to the remote villages of Dhi and Yara. Leaving the cultivated fields of Charang, our trail initially plunges down to the Upper Mustang Khola (river) and then follows the river to the village of Dhi, amid a panorama of mind-boggling geological sights in every direction. After passing through Dhi, we ascend up the Gara Valley slightly on the trail to Yara village, where we overnight at a basic lodge...BLD

Approximate Hiking Time: 5-6 hours

DAY 13

CHARANG (11,677') / TASHI KABUM CAVE / LURI CAVE-TEMPLE

Today we hike up the banks of the Gara Khola, known for the ammonite fossils often found in Mustang's river beds. Our goal is the little-known group of caves at Tashi Kabum, a recently discovered 14th century site that houses some of the richest wall and ceiling paintings in all of Mustang. After a short



Itinerary (cont'd)



hike uphill, we arrive at Luri (12,136'), a cave temple tucked into a cliff face. A winding footpath climbs 300 feet and leads us into two beautifully painted domed chambers. After lunch at the village of Gara, we head back to Charang by vehicle. Overnight lodge in Charang...BLD

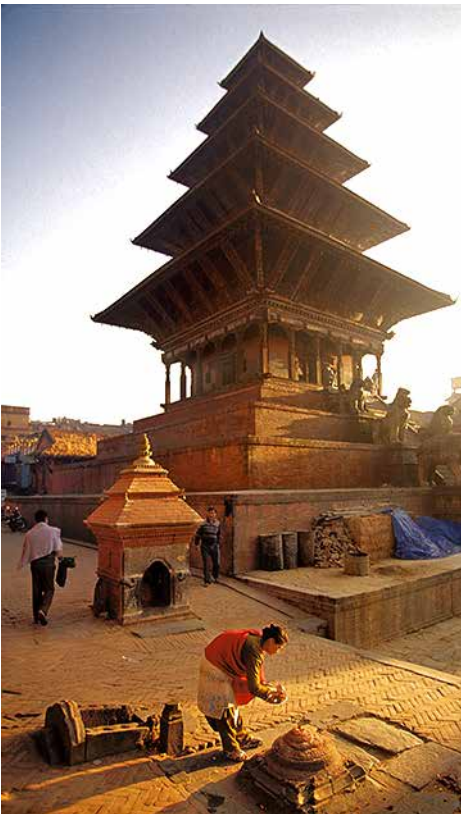
Approximate Hiking Time: 3-4 hours
Approximate Driving Time: 2 hours

DAY 14 CHARANG VILLAGE TO KALOPANI

We head to Kalopani, a small town about an hour's drive beyond Jomsom, stopping for lunch en route. The day's drive is a long one—6 to 7 hours on the road, but it gives us a wonderful farewell to the surreal landscapes of the Kali Gandaki Gorge. It's an interesting transition from the arid topography of Mustang to the lush green valleys on the southern slopes of the mountains—a trans-Himalayan journey through one of the deepest gorges on Earth. Overnight at a guest house in Kalopani...BLD

DAY 15 POKHARA / FLY TO KATHMANDU

We continue by road to Pokhara and take a flight to Kathmandu. The afternoon is free for your last-minute shopping or cultural visits. We'll gather in the evening for our festive Farewell Dinner celebrating our journey. Overnight at the Hotel Yak and Yeti...BLD
Approximate Driving Time: 4-5 hours



DAY 16 DEPART

Transfer to the airport for departure on homeward flights. We recommend late-afternoon flights in case of any delay in flying out of Mustang...B

Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2024

\$8,195 (10-12 members)

\$8,995 (8-9 members)

\$9,195 (6-7 members)

Single supplement: \$1,350

Internal airfare: \$445 (subject to change)

Call for 2025 pricing

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

Special Note on Single Rooms: Due to limited space at many of the lodges on this trek, a small number of single rooms can be accommodated. However, please note that even if requested, single rooms might not be guaranteed. Wilderness Travel will do its best to secure single rooms for those who pay the single supplement, but even if this is confirmed in advance, arrangements may change while on the trip. Furthermore, all participants may have to share a room and bathroom during certain nights on trek.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of an experienced Trip Leader
- Services of trail staff on hikes
- Private cooking staff while staying in the lodges in Mustang
- All meals included except 2 dinners as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Sleeping bags, sleeping pads, and liners for use at the lodges
- Accommodations in first-class hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara, and in basic but best-available lodges in Mustang
- Land transportation, airport transfers as noted
- Nepal permits and fees as applicable

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare; internal airfare, airport departure taxes; any meals not specified after each itinerary day; optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff; any additional hotel nights that may be needed due to your international travel schedule; pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations (if any), visa fees, travel insurance; and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.). In the event of non-availability of internal flights, our Wilderness Travel representative will try to arrange alternative transport (at extra cost to you).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation	\$600
90 days prior to departure	Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!
61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost
46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost
45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

MANDATORY EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSURANCE

Please note: Insurance for emergency evacuation is required for this trip. Call for more details.

Extend Your Adventure!

To help you make the most of your adventure, we've created several exciting trip extensions. For detailed information, including full itineraries and complete pricing, please visit our webpage and click on "Extend Your Trip": www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/nepal/hiking-cultural-mustang-manthang/extensions



SCENIC EVEREST FLIGHT

From Kathmandu, take a spectacular one-hour mountain flight for views of a Himalayan panorama ranging from Kanchenjunga (28,208') in the east to Annapurna I and Dhaulagiri in the west. The highlight is a marvelous view of the pyramid-shaped summit of Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak at 29,035 feet. The one-hour flights are typically aboard an 18- to 20-passenger pressurized aircraft. All seats provide equally good viewing opportunities, with the mountains in view on the left side of the plane for the eastward leg of the journey, and then in view on the right side for the return westward leg. Flights depart in the mornings only, and we recommend booking it during your second full morning in Kathmandu.

1 days. From \$295.

TIGER MOUNTAIN POKHARA LODGE EXTENSION

A stay at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, an exclusive retreat set on a spectacular hilltop ridge a thousand feet above the Pokhara Valley, offers the opportunity to revel in magnificent panoramic views of the Annapurna skyline, including the fish-tailed peak of Machapuchare and three of the world's 26,247-foot Himalayan peaks: Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, and Manaslu. Guided hikes through rhododendron and oak forests, farmlands, and gentle valleys, and village visits where you'll enjoy great cultural encounters are a highlight of your stay. Sightseeing, country drives, and spa services are also available. We also offer the option of a three-night stay. Call for details.

3 days. From \$1395.

BANGKOK EXTENSION

Discover the wealth of beautiful cultural monuments of Bangkok, one of Asia's most exciting cities. With a private guide, journey by private longtail boat through the winding klongs (waterways) of the Chao Phraya River, then spend the day visiting the city's ornate and beautiful sites, including Wat Arun, Bangkok's most well-known landmark, the dazzling Grand Palace, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the enormous gold-plated Reclining Buddha, and the vibrant market at Pak Klong Talad, where a vast variety of orchids and colorful flowers are sold.

3 days. From \$995.



Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Hotel Yak and Yeti
Kathmandu, Nepal

Date: Day 1

Suggested arrival time: by 3:00 pm

Suggested Airport for Arrival
Kathmandu International Airport (KTM)

A complimentary transfer is provided from the Kathmandu Airport to the Hotel Yak and Yeti for all trip members upon arrival. A WT representative will meet you outside the customs area and will be holding a Wilderness Travel sign. If you have booked extra services for early arrival, a voucher for your transfer and extra hotel nights will be sent with your final documents. Please note that check-in at the hotel begins at 2:00 pm.

DEPARTURE

Hotel Yak and Yeti
Kathmandu, Nepal

Date: Day 16

Suggested departure time: late afternoon

Suggested Airport for Departure
Kathmandu International Airport (KTM)

A complimentary transfer will be provided from the hotel to the Kathmandu International Airport for all trip members. If you have booked extra services for late a late departure, a voucher will be sent to you in your Final Documents. Please note that check-out from the hotel is by 12:00 pm.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Kathmandu. Most trip members fly to Kathmandu via Bangkok, Hong Kong, Singapore, or the Middle East. A forced overnight is normally required en route. Airlines with the most convenient schedules for this trip include:

Cathay Pacific

Phone: 800-233-2742

www.cathay-usa.com

American Airlines

Phone: 800-433-7300

www.aa.com

United Airlines

Phone: 800-241-6522

www.united.com

Thai Airways

Phone: 800-426-5204

www.thaiair.com

Qatar Airways

Phone: 877-777-2827

www.qatarairways.com

Etihad Airways

Phone: 888-838-4425

www.etihad.com

Turkish Airlines

Phone: 800-874-8875

www.turkishairlines.com

Singapore Air

Phone: 800-742-3333

www.singaporeair.com

Warning: We highly recommend you DO NOT book any flight schedules with Royal Nepal Airlines. Although they are operational, they have a history of last minute schedule changes and flight cancellations.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it may be necessary to depart from the US one day prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary, and a forced overnight is normally required en route on return (all hotel nights en route or return are at your own expense). The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on “Trip Leaders”: www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/nepal/hiking-cultural-mustang-manthang



MANI RAI

Mani Rai comes from the small village of Deusa, located just south of Namche Bazaar and Lukla. With a background in guiding, mountaineering, and climbing, he has been a trekking guide since 2000, leading hikes to the lofty heights of the Himalayas. Mani is a licensed mountaineering instructor, and sometimes leads youth trainings for the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA). He speaks Nepali, English, Hindi, and Raj, and when not guiding, enjoys traveling and reading. He is married and has two sons.



DEVENDRA BASNET

Devendra Basnet was born in the foothills of the Himalayas in Darjeeling, India, and makes his home in Kathmandu, Nepal, with his wife and two children. A WT Trip Leader since 1987, “DB” leads our cultural and hiking journeys into the Himalayas, across India, and along the ancient Silk Roads of Central Asia. His university studies in Zoology launched him in an early career as a naturalist guide, tracking tigers and spotting rare birds in Nepal’s renowned Royal Chitwan National Park, and collecting elusive Himalayan butterflies for the British Natural History Museum. “I love working with people and working in beautiful surroundings, so guiding is a natural for me. I especially love being in the high Himalayas, from Tibet to Bhutan to India, and in areas rich in nature and wildlife. I want my trip members to appreciate how fast everything is changing, and help them take back wonderful memories of the wild places and rich cultures we visit.” Devendra speaks English, Nepali, Hindi, as well as some Tibetan and Bengali and is learning Chinese.

Accommodations



HOTEL YAK AND YETI

Kathmandu, Nepal

Days 1 to 2 (2 nights), Day 15 (1 night)

Perfectly located in the heart of Kathmandu yet on a quiet street, the Yak and Yeti is a combination of old and new. Its restaurants and conference rooms are in a restored century-old Rana palace, a showcase of the era's opulence. The hotel's newer wings blend with the old palace, offering guest rooms with a high degree of comfort and traditional Nepali decor. The hotel's gardens, complete with swimming pool, walking trail, and temple dedicated to the goddess Kumari, make it a relaxing hideaway from the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu.



HOTEL BARAHI

Pokhara, Nepal

Day 3 (1 night)

Just steps from Phewa Lake in the heart of Pokhara, the Hotel Barahi is a quiet oasis with easy access to lakeside shops and restaurants. You can take a dip in the swimming pool, have a drink on the terrace in the landscaped garden, and enjoy a cultural show with live music and dancing in the evening. The restaurant serves a full breakfast buffet and a nice variety of European, Asian, and traditional Nepali cuisine. Each guest room has air conditioning, a spacious bathroom, and a private balcony.



MUSTANG LODGES

Nepal

Days 4 to 14 (11 nights)

The style and character of our lodges in Mustang vary from high-altitude inn to basic mountain hostel. Though amenities can be fairly minimal, hospitality is always a key element and guests are warmly welcomed. The beauty of the lodges is, of course, the dramatic scenery and the exotically remote locations. Some lodges have shared guest rooms and bath facilities, while others have private rooms and private bathrooms. There will be basic toilet and washing facilities, some with western-style toilets and some with squat-style toilets, and hot water for bathing will be available from time to time. Rooms will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, with the rooms that have private baths going first (it's worth it to sign up early!). We provide you with warm sleeping bags with liners, and our crew will be equipped with camping gear should the need arise. Our renowned Wilderness Travel cooking crew will join us, so your meals will be wonderfully varied, with a mix of western and Nepali food, keeping you healthy and well fueled for your hikes, as well as hydrated with plenty of clean, boiled water.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Nepal: Lodge to Lodge Hiking in Upper Mustang* webpage and click on the "Accommodations" tab.

Trip Details

TRIP LEVEL

This trip is Level 4, Moderate to Strenuous. It is an adventurous overland journey with day hikes of up to five hours, with accommodations ranging from comfortable hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara to basic lodges in Mustang. Our activities center on hiking and exploring cultural and historic sites. Road travel in Mustang is mostly on graveled, dusty roads, and on some days, road travel is long. Good dust masks are recommended, especially for those who are allergic to dust. In general, you should be fit and be able to be on your feet 4 to 6 hours a day on this journey. Our walks and hikes are on mountain trails that involves ascents and descents of up to a thousand feet. All participants should be in good shape and enjoy mountain trails. The exploration of the monasteries and day hikes normally involve some up and down walking, which at high altitudes and in dry conditions, can feel strenuous. For your own enjoyment, we recommend you make a special effort to be in good physical condition. Daily brisk walking is an excellent preparatory exercise.

While in Mustang, we will be at altitudes between 9,000 and 13,678 feet. Individuals vary widely in their physical response to high altitude. It is not uncommon to experience mild headaches or sleeplessness for a day or two when you first arrive at high altitude. Most people gradually adjust within a few days. This itinerary provides time for acclimatization, but you must pace yourself. Go slowly and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.

GETTING IN SHAPE

Every participant must understand that our travel in Mustang will be challenging—you should be in excellent physical condition. Even though trip members carry only a daypack (with camera, jacket, rain gear, water bottle, and other small necessities you may need during the day), we

recommend you make a special effort to get in top physical shape for the trip by hiking, running, swimming, bicycling, or engaging in other forms of aerobic exercise well beyond your normal routine. Many activities get your heart and lungs into shape, but the most effective way of getting fit for hiking is to hike! Walking up and down flights of stairs is also an effective way to train for the steep ascents and descents in the Himalaya. Bending your knees as you go down stairs will help strengthen your quad muscles. At least two months prior to your trek, we urge you to go on weekend day hikes that involve long uphill and downhill walking.

WEATHER

Mustang is a dry, high-altitude realm, like Tibet. The weather will likely be quite comfortable, with blue skies most days, but nights can be very cold. At high altitude, weather is always unpredictable, and the effect of the wind-chill factor can create extra-cold conditions. In Kathmandu and Pokhara, it will be hot and humid, with a high chance of rain, since our journey is set close to the annual monsoon season (but a great time to be in Mustang, which is drier, as it is the rain shadow north of the main Himalayan range!). In Mustang, there is also a strong wind in the late morning and afternoons on most days, which can kick up the dust on the trail. All participants should be equipped with good wind-proof jackets with a hood and good dusk masks. The sun is very intense at these high altitudes and care should be taken to use sun screen as well as a good hat with a full brim for sun protection.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our lodges in Mustang are rustic but comfortable, owned and operated by local Mustang families. They are a wonderful way to experience local hospitality and gain an insight into the lives of the local people. There are basic

Average Daily Max/Min °F												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kathmandu	65/35	67/39	77/45	83/53	86/61	85/67	84/68	83/68	83/66	80/56	74/45	67/37
Jomsom	37/7	39/10	45/16	52/25	57/30	63/39	63/43	61/45	59/37	52/27	46/16	41/10
Lo Manthang	53/33	55/33	58/36	70/35	67/36	65/34	64/37	70/36	66/34	63/34	58/33	58/33
Rainfall - Inches												
Kathmandu	0.6	1.6	0.9	2.3	4.8	9.7	14.7	13.6	6.1	1.5	0.3	0.1
Jomsom	0.9	1.6	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.7	4.1	4.4	2.8	1.5	0.6	0.8
Lo Manthang	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.4	1.8	1.5	5.1	5.0	3.5	0.6	0.1	0.2

Trip Details (cont'd)

toilet and washing facilities, some with Western-style toilets and some with squat-style toilets. Hot water may not be available at every lodge. We provide you with good quality sleeping bags with liners for extra comfort at all of the lodges. Our crew will be equipped with camping gear in case we need it to camp. One of the wonderful benefits of staying in these lodges is the chance to interact with local Mustang families, enjoy cultural encounters with these welcoming mountain people, see them milking their yaks, churning butter, weaving, and going about the everyday chores of traditional life in a remote Himalayan village. In Kathmandu and Pokhara, we'll stay in comfortable hotels with modern amenities in central locations.

CUISINE

Our own experienced cook crew will accompany us in Mustang. The crew is part of the renowned Wilderness Travel trekking staff, and all our meals at the lodges will be prepared by them, though we may also share meals made by the lodge from time to time. Our cooks are extremely well trained and offer hygienically prepared meals featuring both Nepali and western-style dishes. Meals will be served in the lodge's dining room. Our drinking water is always boiled and treated. Washing water is put out before every meal so you can wash your hands before eating—a key to keeping healthy! Breakfast is normally a light meal of porridge or granola, with hot milk, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, biscuits, or cookies. Lunches may include potatoes, eggs, curried vegetables, cheese, local-style breads, fruit, tea, hot chocolate or a fruit drink. Dinner is typically soup and a main course such as a noodle dish, or meat or vegetable stew, depending on what is available in local villages. Dessert on trek is usually canned or fresh fruit.

A TYPICAL DAY IN MUSTANG

This is a vehicle-based overland trip with day hikes on most days. We will travel along the newly constructed highway (work is still going on in many places on this road) and make daily hikes on trails off the highway to explore interesting sites, temples, monasteries, and villages. This way, we avoid hiking on the dusty roads and hike only where no vehicles are or where the traffic is sparse. Hiking distances are normally measured in hours not miles, since the terrain and prevailing conditions have such an effect on how long a hike feels.

On a typical day, we wake-up around 6:30 am. After breakfast, we set off by vehicle, normally a short distance of an hour or so, to the trailhead where we start our hike. Our hikes vary from around 4 to 6 hours, depending on the trail chosen for the day. There is always a guide in the lead and a “sweeper” who trails behind the slowest hiker to ensure that no one is lost on the trail. We ask you not to hike ahead of the leader because trails are often not well-marked.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Asia Manager or email us at asia@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

TOUCAN CLUB

We're proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business! The Wilderness Travel Toucan Club was established to reward our travelers for their loyalty. For details, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

- World's Best Tour Operators:** *Travel + Leisure*, 2022, 11-time winner
- Best Travel Specialists in the World:** *Conde Nast Traveller*, 2022, 3 years in a row
- Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips:** *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row
- Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *USA Today*
- Trip of the Year:** *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner
- 50 Tours of a Lifetime:** *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row
- Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

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