

South Col Expeditions



Dhaulagiri from the flight to Jomsom

All Rights Reserved. Copyright Sujoy Das 2015/www.sujoydas.com

Mustang - The Forbidden Kingdom

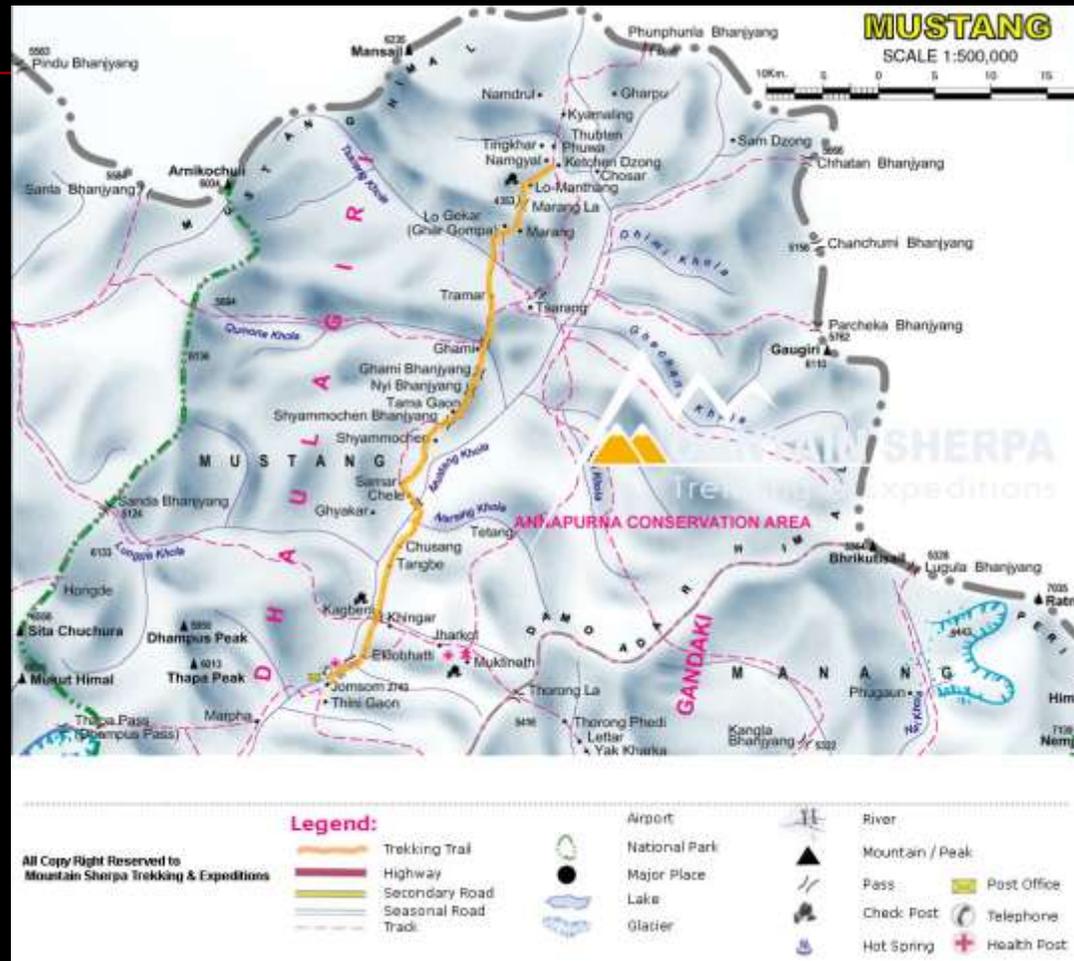


All Rights Reserved. Copyright Sujoy Das 2015/www.sujoydas.com

Map of the Mustang Region

■ This trek covers one of the last Shangri-la's in the Himalaya. A lost kingdom bordering Tibet which has a regulated entry of not more than three thousand visitors per year with magnificent monasteries, frescoes, palaces and a way of life which would soon vanish forever.

■ There is already a road from Lo Manthang to Jomsom which is a rough dirt track which we will use to descent from Lo Manthang .



The Mustang and Lo Manthang Trek 14 days (Kathmandu to Kathmandu)

- Sculpted canyons and fantastic rock formations, medieval villages, ruined fortresses, royal palaces, unexplored Neolithic cave complexes, Tibetan Buddhist gompas and snow-peaks characterize this spectacular region, a thumb sticking up into the Tibetan plateau. Upper Mustang and its walled capital, Lo Manthang, is a remote and starkly beautiful region, home to Buddhism as well as the remnants of the older, mystical Bon religion.
- The fourteen day trip from Kathmandu has been carefully designed to provide proper acclimatization so as to ensure the least discomfort for the trekker. We will use lodges en route.
- **The costs of this trek is USD 2200/- plus cost of meals on actuals Kathmandu to Kathmandu. Exclusions apply For details please check page 8.**



The Mustang Trek Itinerary 1

- CAUTION: Though the trek to Mustang is below 4000 metres for most of the way, there are numerous ups and downs, mostly crossing canyons in the upper Kali Gandaki valley. Hence, the walking can be hard on some days especially when a long descent to a bridge is followed by an equally long ascent. It can also be very dusty and windy after noon
!Day 01 Kathmandu to Pokhara
- We take our own private micro bus from Kathmandu to Pokhara. The rest of the day is spent in Pokhara relaxing and preparing for our departure the next day.
- Day 02 Pokhara to Jomsom (2760m) by flight and on to Kagbeni by trek. – In case of flight cancellation we will drive to Jomsom in our own jeep.
- Day 03 Kagbeni to Chele (3100m) 430 m ascent and 170 m descent 4 to 5 hours
- We take a jeep in the morning from Jomsom for Kagbeni and then walk to Chele. The trail leaves Kagbeni and climbs to a ridge with a chorten. After several more ups and downs the trail enters the village of Tangbe (3060m). From Tangbe it is an hour to Chuksang (2980m). Across the Kali Gandaki from Chuksang there are some spectacular looking red and ochre coloured cliffs. After some more ups and downs the trail leaves the Kali Gandaki and climbs to Chele. some more ups and downs the trail leaves the Kali Gandaki and climbs to Chele.



The Mustang Trek Itinerary 2

- Day 04 Chele to Syangmochen (3800m) (6 to 7 hours)
- From Chele there is a long and relentless slog to the pass of Chele La (3630m). From the pass there is a long and mild descent to Samar (3600m). From Samar the trail climbs to the Bhena La (3830m). From the Bhena La there is yet another climb to the Yamdo La (4010m) from where the trail drops to the village of Syangmochen. This is a hard day's walking.
- Day 05 Syangmochen to Ghemi (3510m) (5 to 6 hours)
- From Shyangmochen the path descends to the village of Gelling (3570m). From Gelling there is another climb to the pass of Nyi La (4020m) which marks the southern boundary of the kingdom of Lo. The trail then drops steeply to the village of Ghemi.
- Day 6 Ghemi to Tsarang (3575m) (4 to 5 hours)
- The trail drops from Ghemi crosses a bridge and then passes what is the most spectacular mani wall in Mustang. It then climbs to Choya La (3870m) and descends to the village of Tsarang.
- Day 7 Tsarang to Lo Manthang 450 m ascent 200 m descent (3840m)
- The path descends about 125m, crosses a stream and enters the Tholung valley. It then climbs gradually to a ridge and a large chorten. From here the trail leads to the Lho La (3950m) from where it drops to the walled city of Lo Manthang



The Mustang Trek Itinerary 3



- Day 08 , 09 and 10 Lo Manthang
- We spend three days in and around Lo Manthang exploring the walled city, the monasteries, the palace, frescoes and other sights.
- Day 11 – one buffer day on the trek to be utilized as needed
- Day 12 Jeep from Lo Manthang to Chuksang and then down to Kagbeni and Jomsom for the night
- Day 13 Jomsom to Pokhara by flight
- Day 14 Pokhara to Kathmandu by flight.

The Mustang Trek Costs 2016

■ **US\$ 2200/-** (exclusions apply see details below) please budget **USD 350** for meals and other costs **en route**

- The cost is per person for Kathmandu to Kathmandu (14 days) as per the itinerary given
- Costs given above are at current rates of 2016 and may change without notice. Changes if any will be notified 3 months before the trek.

Costs include:

- Mustang Special Restricted area permit @ USD 50 per day is covered.
- Annapurna Conservation Area Permit and TIMS permit is covered
- All road transfers Kathmandu to Pokhara,; Lo Manthang to Kagbeni mostly by private jeep.
- Return flight ticket from Pokhara to Kathmandu and flights from Pokhara to Jomsom and back
- Airport tax as applicable
- All accommodation on the trek on twin sharing basis.
- Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu one night on the way in and two nights accomodation in Pokhara is covered on twin sharing basis.
- Cost of porters/guides for the trek. Please note that porters will carry one duffel bag or backpack not exceeding 10 kgs in weight for each trekker comprising of personal items, clothing, sleeping bag etc.

Costs not included

- All meals in Kathmandu and Pokhara
- Breakfast lunch and dinner on the trek is not included. Desserts, drinks, and exotic items listed in the lodge menus are not included. Alcohol, cold drinks (coca cola, sprite, beer), juices, ice cream etc on the trek and in Lukla.
- Client travel and medical insurance of any kind. Emergency evacuation costs if needed.
- Video camera fees in National Parks (where applicable).
- Bottled drinks; boiled, filtered or bottled water; alcohol; snacks etc
- Hot showers (Rs 200-300 per shower);
- Personal clothing and equipment; sleeping bag; duvet /down/ goretek jacket, medicines for personal use etc.
- Air fare from residence country to Nepal and back
- Tips to porters at the end of trek

Estimate of Costs not included

- **Fooding at lodges en route will be around USD 25 per person per day** On an estimate this would be around **USD 350** for the entire 14 days. Cost increases as you go higher up the valley and will vary depending on what you eat/drink. Alcohol and soft drinks like Coke etc not covered in this estimate.
- Tips to guides /porters can be estimated at USD 50 to USD 60 per person to contribute to the common pool.

Why trek with South Col?



- South Col is a small, personalized firm specializing in treks in the Himalayan region.
- Every single trek done by South Col till date has been lead by Sujoy Das himself.
- We are keenly aware of the fragility of environment and cultures in which we trek and recognize our responsibility in maintaining them. "Take pictures, leave only foot prints" is our motto.
- Trekkers get personalized attention both in the planning stage as well as during the trek itself.
- Support team of guides and porters as needed are personally supervised by Sujoy to ensure that the clients are comfortable and well looked after.
- Sujoy has intimate knowledge of the trekking trails so can advise on the best stops for photographs and local culture etc. Lodges for night stops and camping sites if needed are selected to ensure the best views, food and comfort.

The Mustang Trek FAQ #1

How fit do I have to be to do a trek? Whilst you do not need to be super-fit, you need to be fit enough to comfortably walk for 5-6 hours per day in the mountains on reasonable trails. You will definitely need to walk for around an hour at least every day to get fit. If you can spend some time in the gym it would help. Walking uphill/stairs etc also helps a great deal.

What is a typical group? Will I fit in? Groups range in size from 8 up to 12, and typically comprise a range of nationalities and experience. We have also had a group upto 14! So far, all of our groups have got along very well. One of the attractions of such a trip is the chance to meet people with different backgrounds and personalities.

Do I need to buy special equipment? Usually our clients simply bring their existing clothing and equipment and if necessary supplement this with some extra items purchased cheaply in Kathmandu.

I am a single trekker. How does this work? Normally single trekkers have no problems fitting in with a group. Normally single trekkers share rooms or lodges with other trekkers of the same sex, but if we have an odd-number we ensure that a room or lodge is organized accordingly.

Will I be able to deal with the high altitude? Our itineraries are designed so that our clients ascend at a sensible and safe rate. The effects of altitude are felt by everyone, even the guides and Sherpas, but most people find that gentle acclimatization allows them to reach their high point without any problems. We will be monitoring this closely on the trek and in the event of any problems we will ensure that there is no compromise on safety. For details on AMS visit http://www.ismmed.org/np_altitude_tutorial.htm#prevention

What are the Tea Houses like? Tea houses are a way of life for almost all trekkers. They are the combination of guest house, restaurant, and social hang out. . Our many years of experience along these routes have helped us find the friendliest, cleanest, and most enjoyable tea houses with the best views.



Dipankar Sengupta

The Mustang Trek FAQ #2

What is the accommodation at the tea houses? Private rooms are available in most tea houses except for those at very high altitudes. Most bathrooms are shared but in some of the nicer lodges we have attached bathrooms with running water. Usually hot showers will be available every evening.

Where do we eat our meals? If you are on a tea house trek you will eat breakfast and dinner at your tea house. We will stop for lunch at one of the various trail side restaurants. And snacks are always easy to find at tea stalls including tea and coffee.

What type of food is served on the trek? Almost every tea house serves the traditional Nepali meal Dal Bhat (rice and curried lentils). All tea houses we stay at have a variety of different foods on the menu including noodles, rice, potatoes, vegetables and soup. Some have Nepali versions of western food such as pizza, lasagna, pasta etc. Sodas and beer are available at most of the tea houses and of course tea and coffee is served everywhere.

Where do we get water during the trip? It is our suggestion that in order to save money, trekkers carry iodine tablets or lugols solution with them so that they can purify the water every day. Though tea houses will have bottled mineral water available it is likely to get expensive as one goes higher up. Iodine is available in Kathmandu.

What type of shoes or boots should I wear? The proper foot wear depends on the trek. The Everest trek should be done in boots with firm ankle support. Having said that you will find locals and porters trekking in sneakers! Shoes and boots are best purchased before your arrival for the trek with proper break in.

What will the weather be like? Weather affects everything in Nepal and trekking is no exception. Sudden rain storms or snow flurries are always a possibility at higher altitudes. The weather during the trekking season is somewhat more stable. We pay close attention to weather reports during the trekking season. Mustang is the rain shadow and hence rain or snow is not expected.

How should I give my equipment to the porter? Ideally the gear should be given to the porter in a duffle bag locked and this will be returned to the client in the evening. As you may not be able to access the duffle bag during the day please carry the essentials like water, jacket, camera, sweets etc in your daypack.

Trek Leader Profile

Sujoy Das has been trekking and photographing in the Himalayas for the last thirty years.

His notable treks include: Winter ascent of Kala Pattar peak (Everest region) Dec 2003; Everest Base Camp 18,500 feet (2001); Thorung-la pass/Annapurna Circuit 17,746 feet (2000); Annapurna Base Camp 14,300 feet (1999); Gokyo Ri peak Everest region 18,275 feet (1998); Rupkund Lake, Garhwal 16,200 feet (1996); Kangchendzonga Base Camp North and Green Lakes 16,875 feet (1987); Dorji La peak North Sikkim 18,644 feet (1986); crossing of Lhonak-la pass North Sikkim (1987).

He has visited the Annapurna region six times including two visits to the Base Camp and the entire Annapurna circuit. He has trekked in the Everest region eight times including the winter of 2003-04. In the Eastern Himalaya he has trekked the Singalila ridge of Sandakphu and Phalut six times and made four visits to the alp of Dzongri in West Sikkim.

In September 2009 he trekked across seven passes in Ladakh from the monastery of Lamayuru to Padum in Zaskar and again in September 2011 trekked the high left bank of the Spiti river. In April - May 2011 he led a successful trek with twenty one persons to Thyanboche Monastery and upto Kala Pattar and Everest Base Camp and again trekked the Gokyo lakes in April 2012.

He is the joint author and photographer of Sikkim- A Travellers Guide and Lonely Planet: Nepal and his essays and photographs have been published in books and magazines worldwide. He is currently working on a book on the Indian Himalaya and organizing treks and photo expeditions. For a view of his photographs of the Himalaya please visit www.sujoydas.com. He can be contacted at sujoyrdas@gmail.com



Om Mani Padme Hum!

Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus

