

Lower Dolpo Circuit - 17 Days

Lower dolpo loop is one of the stunning trekking routes in the dolpo region. It's also famous because of its competitive price and easily doable for two weeks. Lower dolpo trek started from Juphal airfield and ended again in the same place. Trek leads you to the lower region of dolpo called Dunai, from where you follow the Thulibheri River and enter the amazing place called Kaike village also known as Tiserong, where the majority of Magar communities residing there with a rare indigenous language called Kaike. After leaving Kaike you will directly enter in the deep gorge, forest, and rock path with amazing river sounds and some nomad camps. After having numerous ups and downs you will enter an amazing valley called Dho Tarap where hundreds of settlements are there.

You will get an opportunity to observe Buddhist and Bon Communities with numerous Monasteries, traditional houses, and flat fields. Dho Tarap is also one of the highest human settlements in Nepal with a diverse culture and landscape at an elevation of 4100m above sea level. Dho Tarap is also the entry point for the Upper Dolpo and the border of Nepal and Tibet Autonomous Region.

PRICE INCLUDES

- 3-night hotel in Kathmandu on a bed and breakfast basis
- 1 night hotel in Nepalganj with breakfast
- Domestic flights from Kathmandu - Nepalganj - Juphal and return airfare
- One expert trek leader or Hire Norbu with a local assistant
- All Three-time meals during a trek (the best and healthiest food prepared by our trekking chef)
- Special Trekking permit and national park fees
- Trekking equipment -Mattresses, Member tents, and Kitchen utensils
- Staff's salary, food, insurance, and clothing.
- Farewell dinner in Kathmandu

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights and visa fees.
- Personal expenses and meals in Kathmandu.
- Travel insurance, Rescue, and evacuation.
- Tips and gratitude for staff Leader tips on your discretion.
- Donation and local entrance fee.
- Extra baggage weight on domestic flight

ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Day 1: Day 1 Arrival in Kathmandu

Upon your arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport Kathmandu, you will be directly transferred to a 3-star hotel and of course, we chose the hotel wisely with great hygiene. When you have rest in your hotel your guide will be briefing you in the afternoon and in the evening you will have time for sightseeing and shopping in the town. Welcome dinner will be provided in the traditional hotel where your guide will introduce you to your trip and further preparations.

Day 2: Day 2 Fly to Nepalganj one hour

In the afternoon you will fly to Nepalganj. In Nepalganj you will be received by hotel vehicles and transferred to the hotel.

Day 3: Day 3 Nepalganj to Dolpa Juphal airport (2400m) by 35 minutes flight and trek to Dunai 3 hours

Early morning at 4 am you will be dropped off at the airport by hotel vehicles and we will fly to Juphal Airfield for 35 minutes. When we land at Juphal airport we will have our breakfast and commence our trek to Dunai for 2-3 hours depending on your pace.

In Dunai, we will be at lunchtime and after your first lunch in Dolpo, we will little bit hike nearby Bon and Buddhist monasteries. In the evening our entire team will be together and will do short introductions to each other

Day 4: Day 4 Dunai to Tarakot (2900m 9514 feet)

Embark to the Tarakot(Kaike) Valley we will encounter many small villages on the way. Tarakot is a small village in Kaike, The Majority of Magar people reside in this region they have their own Kaike Magar dialect which is rare and unique.

After leaving the deep gorges along with the Bheri River slowly the landscape will open and you will encounter Some Magar villages with Local Magar people. There are some health posts and police check posts for local communities and travellers.

Duration: Approx 5 Hours +430m

Distance: Approx 15 km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 5: Day 5 Tarakot to Laini Odar (3370m)

Embarking towards the beautiful landscape of Dolpo so many natural beauties and cultural aspects are always top-notch. Leaving behind the Kaike valley we will ascend towards Dho Tarap tales along with natural river sound, deep rock gorge, and narrow path that will lead us to heaven.

Laini Odar is on an elevation of 3700m from sea level where a couple of tea houses are running there. we will be in a tented camp.

Duration: Approx 7 hours, +810m, -100m

Distance: Approx 10km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 6: Day 6 Laini Odar to Nawarapni (3780m)

Embark on an adventure trek to the lower dolpo region many remarkable things will attached to you. While you are traveling through the trails lots of terrains and bushy paths will welcome you through the entire trek. Sometimes you will be on the top hill and sometimes at the bottom of the trails.

Nawarapni is a small Nomad Camp where a few tea houses are opening there for travellers and open spaces for camping. After a long hours trek you might get exhausted so you can go nearby stream and take natural healing water massage by dipping your legs and hands.

Duration: Approx 5 hours +500m, -60m

Distance: 10km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 7: Day 7 Nawarapni to Dho Tarap (4100m)

After Leaving the small nomad camp you will be following the Taksi River till Dho Tarap. Flat trails and some local people from Dho Tarap will be seen there for tea houses and their animals.

While approaching Dho Valley, A big Stupa and Scripted Mantras will welcome you to this pristine land. Dho Tarap is one of the highest human settlements in Nepal and Tibetan-influenced culture will be seen there.

Duration: Approx 6 hours +630m, -140m

Distance: 19km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 8: Day 8 Rest and explore in Dho Tarap Valley

A rest day in Dho Tarap Valley offers a wonderful opportunity to acclimatize, explore, and immerse yourself in the local culture and natural beauty. Here are some activities you can enjoy during your rest day

1. Cultural Exploration

- **Visit Monasteries:** Spend time visiting the local monasteries such as Ribo Bumpa Monastery and Bonpo Monastery. Learn about the spiritual practices, architecture, and history of these religious sites.

Interact with Locals: Engage in conversations with the villagers to learn about their daily life, traditions, and customs. This interaction can be incredibly enriching and provide insights into the Tibetan-influenced culture of the

region.

2. Local Walks and Short Hikes

- **Stroll Around the Village:** Take a leisurely walk around Dho Tarap village to observe the traditional stone houses, mani walls, and prayer flags. It's a peaceful way to soak in the local atmosphere.
- **Explore Nearby Villages:** If you feel up for it, take a short hike to nearby villages such as Tokyu, which is known for its picturesque setting and ancient monasteries.

3. Wildlife and Nature Observation

- **Bird Watching:** The area is home to various bird species. Bring binoculars and spend time spotting and identifying different birds in the valley.
- **Nature Walks:** Take a gentle nature walk to enjoy the unique flora of the region. The valley's grasslands and high-altitude meadows are particularly beautiful.

4. Meditation and Yoga

- **Practice Meditation:** Use the serene environment of the valley to practice meditation. Many visitors find the spiritual ambience of Dho Tarap conducive to mindfulness and meditation practices.
- **Yoga Sessions:** If you practice yoga, find a quiet spot with a scenic view and spend some time stretching and doing yoga. It's a great way to relax your muscles and mind.

5. Photography

- **Landscape Photography:** Capture the stunning landscapes, traditional architecture, and daily life in the village. The changing light throughout the day provides excellent opportunities for photography.
- **Portrait Photography:** With permission, take portraits of the local people, showcasing their traditional attire and expressions.

6. Rest and Relaxation

- **Read a Book:** Bring a book and enjoy reading in the tranquil surroundings. It's a perfect way to relax and take a mental break.
- **Rest in Nature:** Find a comfortable spot to sit and enjoy the views, listen to the sounds of nature, and just be present in the moment.

7. Learn Local Crafts

- **Handicrafts:** If possible, learn about local handicrafts and maybe even try your hand at making something. Villagers often engage in weaving and other traditional crafts.

8. Document Your Journey

- **Journal Writing:** Spend time writing in your journal about your experiences, thoughts, and reflections. It's a great way to capture memories and insights from your trek.
- **Sketching:** If you enjoy drawing, bring a sketchbook and pencils to sketch the beautiful landscapes or village scenes.

Practical Tips for Rest Day

Stay Hydrated: Ensure you drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, which is especially important at high altitudes.

Eat Well: Enjoy local meals to fuel your body for the rest of your journey.

Check Your Gear: Take the time to check and organize your trekking gear, ensuring everything is in good condition for the next leg of your trek.

Health Check: Monitor your health and be mindful of any symptoms of altitude sickness. Resting adequately will help in acclimatization.

A rest day in Dho Tarap Valley is not just about physical rest but also about connecting with the place and its people, enriching your trekking experience with cultural and natural insights.

Day 9: Day 9 Dho To Numala Base Camp (4440m) 5 hours

Embark on an adventure journey this day you will see the entire valley of Dho Tarap and so many Bon and Buddhist Monasteries in this beautiful Landscape.

The Dho Tarap Valley is a picturesque valley located in the remote Dolpo region. It's known for its rugged terrain, pristine natural beauty, and unique cultural heritage. The valley is home to several traditional villages where the indigenous people, mainly of Tibetan origin, live a semi-nomadic lifestyle. The region offers stunning views of snow-capped mountains, lush forests, and meandering rivers, making it a popular destination for trekkers and adventurers seeking an off-the-beaten-path experience.

After leaving Taksi village you will turn south towards the Numala Pass. Walking through the Pasture land and rugged terrain slowly you will climb up to base camp on elevations of 4440m.

Duration: Approx 4 Hours, +360m

Duration: 9.5km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 10: Day 10 Trek to Danighar or Bagala Base camp (4500m) 6-7 hours via crossing Numala

Embark on an Adventure trek along the Lower Dolpa Circuit Numala is a high mountain pass known for its challenging terrain and breathtaking views. The pass lies at an elevation of around 5,190 meters (17,030 feet) above sea level and offers stunning vistas of the surrounding Himalayan peaks and valleys. It's a crucial point along the trekking route and provides access to various remote villages and pristine natural landscapes in the region. Numala refers to a woman's Breast as it seems like a woman's breast structure.

Danighar or Bagala Base Camp is a Small Nomad camp in between Numala and Bagala. During the summer season, Some people from Phoksundo come up here for their animals and wide pasture land.

Duration: Approx 7 Hours, +540m,-960m

Distance: Approx 11 km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 11: Day 11 Trek to Yak Kharkha via crossing Bagala (5190m, 17030 feet) 6-7 hours

Bagala Pass is another notable pass along the Lower Dolpo Circuit. It's located at approximately 5,090 meters (16,700 feet) above sea level. Like Numala Pass, Bagala Pass offers stunning panoramic views of Himalayan peaks and valleys. It's a challenging but rewarding part of the trekking route, known for its rugged terrain and remote wilderness. Travellers often encounter yak caravans and the traditional lifestyle of the Dolpo region's inhabitants while crossing Bagala Pass.

While approaching Yak Kharkha you will see Yarsa Pasture on the way and a wide range of pasture land.

Duration: Approx 6 hours +670m,-1330m

Distance: 10.5km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 12: Day 12 Trek to Phoksundo Lake (3640m, 11942 feet) 3-4 hours

Phoksundo Lake, also known as Rigmo Lake, is a stunning alpine lake located in the lower dolpo region. It's one of the deepest lakes in Nepal and is renowned for its crystal-clear turquoise waters and breathtaking natural beauty. The lake is situated within the Shey Phoksundo National Park, which is known for its unique biodiversity and pristine wilderness.

Phoksundo Lake is surrounded by rugged mountains, including the Kanjirowa Himal to the west and the Norbung Kang to the south. The lake's serene ambience and striking landscape make it a popular destination for trekkers and nature enthusiasts. Additionally, the area is culturally significant, with several Tibetan Buddhists, Bon monasteries, and settlements scattered around the lake.

The lake is also famous for its appearance in the movie "Caravan," which showcased its mesmerizing beauty to a wider audience. Overall, Phoksundo Lake is a must-visit destination for those seeking adventure, tranquility, and natural wonders in the Dolpa region of Nepal.

Duration: Approx 4 hours, +70m,-270m

Distance: 10km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 13: Day 13 Rest and Explore in Phoksundo Lake

During your rest day in Phoksundo, you have plenty of options to do.

Bon Monastery

The Bon religion is an ancient spiritual tradition that predates Tibetan Buddhism and is practised by some communities in the Himalayan region, including in Dolpa, Nepal. Phoksundo Ringmo Village is known for its strong connection to the Bon religion, and you can find several Bon monasteries and practitioners in the area.

The Bon religion has its unique cosmology, rituals, and deities, though it shares some similarities with Tibetan Buddhism due to historical interactions between the two traditions. Bon practitioners often engage in rituals, ceremonies, and meditation practices to connect with spiritual forces and achieve enlightenment.

In Phoksundo Ringmo Village, you may have the opportunity to witness Bon ceremonies, visit Bon monasteries, and learn more about this ancient spiritual tradition from local practitioners.

2. Scenic view of Mountains as Kanjirowa, Norbu Kang and Teikatong.

3. Ringmo Cultural Village

Ringmo Cultural Village, also known as Ringmo Village, is a traditional settlement located near Phoksundo Lake. It's renowned for its picturesque setting, rich cultural heritage, and strong ties to the Bon religion.

The village is nestled amidst the rugged Himalayan landscape, surrounded by towering mountains and lush forests. The traditional stone and mud-brick houses of Ringmo Village blend harmoniously with the natural environment, creating a charming and rustic atmosphere.

Ringmo Village is predominantly inhabited by people of Tibetan descent who practice the Bon religion, though there are also communities of Tibetan Buddhists in the area. The village is home to several Bon monasteries and chortens (stupas), which serve as spiritual and cultural centers for the local community.

Visitors to Ringmo Cultural Village have the opportunity to experience the unique culture and way of life of the Dolpa region. They can explore the narrow lanes, interact with friendly locals, and learn about traditional practices such as yak herding, weaving, and Bon rituals.

Overall, Ringmo Cultural Village offers a fascinating glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of the Dolpa region and is a must-visit destination for travelers seeking an authentic Himalayan experience.

Day 14: Day 14 Trek to Chhepka (2700m, 8858 feet) 6-7 hours

Embark on an adventure trek the entire trek is in ending point. While leaving beautiful Phoksundo Lake with lots of good memories and photograph we descend to Chhepka along the Phoksundo River and rugged terrain paths.

Chhepka Village is a small traditional settlement along the popular trekking routes in the area, particularly along the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek. Chhepka is known for its scenic beauty, traditional architecture, and warm hospitality of its residents.

The village lies amidst the rugged Himalayan landscape, surrounded by towering mountains, lush forests, and pristine rivers. The traditional stone and mud-brick houses of Chhepka reflect the unique architectural style of the region and add to its charm.

Chhepka serves as a stopping point for trekkers and travellers exploring the Dolpa region. It offers basic accommodation options, teahouses, and small shops where visitors can rest and replenish their supplies. The village is also a convenient place to experience the local culture and interact with the friendly villagers.

One notable feature of Chhepka Village is its tranquil ambience and pristine natural surroundings. It's a peaceful retreat where travellers can immerse themselves in the beauty of the Himalayas and enjoy the serenity of rural life.

Overall, Chhepka Village provides a glimpse into the traditional way of life in the Dolpa region and serves as a welcoming haven for trekkers and adventurers exploring this remote corner of Nepal.

Duration: Approx 7.5 hours , + 100m,-1000m

Distance Approx 17km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 15: Day 15 Trek to Juphal airport (2400m, 7874 feet) 7 hours

This is our Last day trekking with lots of memories and photographs in the lower dolpo region. Walking through the forest trails and along the Phoksundo River you will end up in Suligad National Park Check Post.

In Jupha we will be set in a Local hotel with Some local organic food and local people.

Duration: Approx 7 hours, +100m, -300m

Distance: 17km

Overnight: Tented Camp

Day 16: Day 16 Fly back to Nepalganj (150m) and same day in kathmandu (1400m)

Early morning we will leave the hotel for the flight and we will again take the next connecting flight to Kathmandu from Nepalganj.

Day 17: Day 17 Free in Kathmandu

During your free day, you can explore a couple of UNESCO World Heritage sites like

1. Kathmandu Durbar Square

Description: A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this square is home to the ancient royal palace and several beautifully crafted temples and statues.

Highlights: Hanuman Dhoka Palace, Kumari Ghar (home of the Living Goddess), Taleju Temple.

2. Swayambhunath (Monkey Temple)

Description: A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this ancient stupa is one of the most sacred Buddhist sites in Nepal.

Highlights: Panoramic views of Kathmandu Valley, intricate carvings, and numerous monkeys roaming the site.

3. Pashupatinath Temple

Description: One of the holiest Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, located on the banks of the Bagmati River.

Highlights: Observing Hindu cremation rituals, visiting the main temple complex, and exploring the surrounding smaller temples and shrines.

4. Boudhanath Stupa

Description: One of the largest stupas in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it's an important centre of Tibetan Buddhism.

Highlights: Circumambulating the stupa, visiting nearby monasteries, and enjoying the vibrant Tibetan atmosphere.

Religious and Spiritual Sites

5. Patan Durbar Square

Description: Located in Lalitpur, this square is known for its artistic heritage and is another UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Highlights: Patan Museum, Krishna Mandir, Mahabouddha Temple.

6. Bhaktapur Durbar Square

Description: Known for its well-preserved medieval architecture and rich culture, it's a short drive from central Kathmandu.

Highlights: 55-Window Palace, Vatsala Temple, Nyatapola Temple.

Day 18: Day 18 Depart to your Home Country

FAQ

1. How difficult is the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek?

The Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek difficulty is rated as challenging. The trek involves long days of walking, often 6-8 hours, on rugged and steep trails. The route reaches altitudes above 5,000 meters (16,404 feet), including crossing high mountain passes like Numa La and Baga La, requiring trekkers to be in excellent physical condition and well-acclimatized.

2. How long is the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek?

The Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek typically takes 17-22 days to complete, depending on the itinerary and pace. This includes time for acclimatization, side trips, and exploration of the remote villages and landscapes that define this isolated region.

3. What permits do I need for the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek?

For the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek, it would be best to have a Shey Phoksundo National Park entry permit and a Lower Dolpo Restricted Area permit.

These permits are mandatory, but do not worry; your travel agency will obtain your permits.

4. When is the best time to trek the Lower Dolpo Circuit?

The best time to trek the Lower Dolpo Circuit is late spring (May to June) and early autumn (September to October). These seasons offer stable weather, clear skies, and moderate temperatures, ideal for trekking in this remote region.

5. Is the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek safe?

The Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek is generally safe for well-prepared and experienced trekkers. However, due to its remoteness, it's essential to trek with a knowledgeable guide and be prepared for limited infrastructure, challenging weather conditions, and the physical demands of high-altitude trekking.

6. What cultural experiences can I expect on the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek?

The Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek offers rich cultural experiences, including visits to ancient Buddhist monasteries like Shey Gumpa and interactions with the local Dolpo-pa people, who follow Tibetan Buddhist and Bon traditions. The region's isolation has preserved its traditional way of life, making it a unique cultural experience.

7. What type of accommodation is available on the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek?

Accommodation on the Lower Dolpo Circuit Trek is essential, with most nights spent in tea houses or camping. Tea houses provide simple lodging and meals, but the facilities are fundamental, especially in higher and more remote areas. In some parts of the trek, camping is the only option.

