

# DOLPO : TARAP VALLEY AND THE PHOGSUMDO LAKE

A Tibetan enclave in Nepalese territory, Dolpo is a beautiful region where yak caravans carry salt from the Tibetan Pass. For centuries, between the end of May and the end of September, the Dolpopas lead their yak caravans, laden with salt, from snow-covered passes with altitudes exceeding 5000 m to the lush low valleys of Nepal. It is in the heart of these high valleys, where time remains frozen in the past, that our trek is set. Discover the wild landscapes of the Tarap Valley. A unique area where the vast open wilderness is punctuated by dry stone villages, small monasteries and nomadic camps; mountain lakes, herds of sheep, goats and yaks. All features which tell tales of the extraordinary lives lived here. Discover a timeless trek at the end of the world!

 Region	Mustang
 Activity	Trekking
 Duration	18 days
 Group	4 to 15 people
 Code	NEPDOL-EN
 Price	From €3,060
 Level	5/5
 Comfort	3/5
 Language(s)	English

## ITINERARY

### 📍 Day 1 **Arrival in Kathmandu and transfer to the hotel**

Arrival in Kathmandu and welcome by your guide. Transfer to your hotel and evening at leisure. Depending on your arrival time, your guide can introduce you to the old streets of Kathmandu where you can enjoy first glimpses of authentic Nepalese life.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Meals not included*

### 📍 Day 2 **Domestic flight to Nepalganj**

Domestic flight: Kathmandu - Nepalganj (about 50 minutes flight). Free time to relax upon arrival in Nepalganj.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

### 📍 Day 3 **Flight to Juphal - Trek to Dunai (2090 m)**

Morning flight, about 35 minutes to Juphal (2,440 m). Here our trek begins; we walk to Dunai (2,090 m) the main town of the Dolpo district. Juphal is a different universe to the bustling streets we left behind. At the end of October, dolpopas dry red peppers on the roof terraces. Our path goes down to the river Bheri; we cross fields of buckwheat, barley, millet and corn.

*Accommodation: Camping*

*Domestic flight: Nepalganj - Dunai (35 minutes)*

*Elevation: -400m*

*Walking: 3 hours*

### 📍 Day 4 **Dunai - Tarakot (2500 m)**

Today we cross the river Barbung Chhu (Bheri) and many small villages of the valley. After lunch, we have magnificent views of Puth Himal (7246m) and Dogari (6536m), little known peaks which are part of the stunning Dhaulagiri massif.

*Accommodation: Camping*

*Elevation: +500m/-100m*

*Walking: 6 hours*

### 📍 Day 5 **Tarakot - Laini (3135 m)**

This morning, we climb gradually along fields of corn, buckwheat and amaranthus (until mid-October). We stop for lunch at Lapsicape where the rivers Tarap chu and Barbung chu mix; today we cross the longest suspension bridge in the valley. After lunch, a short steep section of the path crosses a forest of juniper trees, pines, fir trees, birch...

*Accommodation: Wild camping, near a stream*

*Elevation: +1095m/-340m*

*Walking: 6 to 7 hours*

### 📍 Day 6 **Laini - Odar (3500 m)**

This morning, our trek begins with a steep climb - about 500 m. Then, our dizzying path alternates between short uphill and downhill sections as we progress through this rugged isolated universe.

*Accommodation: Camping, near a river*

*Elevation: +800m/-430m*

*Walking: 5 hours*

### 📍 Day 7 **Odar - Dho (Tarap) (4040 m).**

Until Lang, first our path is bumpy and then relatively flat. We meet nomads and their flocks along the way (until mid-October).

*Accommodation: Camping, near a Tibetan village*

*Elevation: +805m/-335m*

*Walking: 7 hours*

♥ Day 8 **Rest and Discovery Day in the Tarap Valley**

A restday and a chance visit to the valley of Tarap. Stroll through small Tibetan monasteries (there are no longer monks in these monasteries) and typical Tibetan houses. Visit Buddhist monasteries and bonpos. To perfect our acclimatization, we climb up to 4400 m. We spend the night at the same camp as last night, near to a small Tibetan village.

*Accommodation: Same camp*

*Elevation: +400m/-400m*

*Walking: 2 hours*

♥ Day 9 **Dho - Numa The Phedi (4410 m).**

After a morning at leisure in Dho, we set off at the foot of the Numla Pass - which we cross tomorrow.

*Accommodation: Camp (tent)*

*Elevation: +350m*

*Walking: 3 to 4 hours*

♥ Day 10 **Numa la Phedi - Numa La (5190 m) - Baga la Phedi (4465 m)**

We climb steadily upwards to the Numla Pass at 5185 m. From here, it is like we are on top of the world and we can see the entire Himalayan range: Daulagiri I: 8167 m, Churen Himal: 7310 m, Tukuche Peak: 6920 m, Annapurna Massif, Damodar, Kanjiroba: 6612 m, Kang Chune, Guras Himal, Norbu Kang: 6140 m and the Tibetan plateau to the north. After the pass, it is a steep descent, sometimes across scree, to the torrent. After a small gradual climb and a flat section we arrive at tonight's camping spot with beautiful views of Norbu Kang.

*Accommodation: Camping*

*Elevation: +950m/-910m*

*Walking: 8 hours*

♥ Day 11 **Bagala Phedi - Baga la (5170 m) - Yak Kharka (3907 m).**

Today we cross the Baga La pass at 5170 m and are immersed in a beautiful mineral landscape. The end of our descent is steep.

*Accommodation: Camping*

*Elevation: 800m/-1095m*

*Walking: 6 hours 30 minutes*

♥ Day 12 **Yak Kharka - Phogsumdo Lake (Ringmo 3700 m)**

Our arrival at Lake Phogsumdo (3800 m) and the village of Ringmo (3600 m) presents us with what is undoubtedly one of the most stunning Himalayan panoramic views. Beautiful pine forests, fir and birches surround the stunning turquoise lake.

*Accommodation: Camping*

*Elevation: +200m/-330m*

*Walking: 4 hours*

♥ Day 13 **Phogsumdo Lake (3800m)**

Enjoy a day trip around this breath-taking lake and visit the Bönpo monastery of Ringmo - a truly beautiful setting.

*Accommodation: Same Camp (tent)*

📍 Day 14 **Phogsumdo - Chhepka (2620 m).**

After passing an impressive waterfall - more than 300 m high (!) - a radical change of scenery awaits. Our path plunges into the gorges and forest and we find ourselves surrounded by lush greenery. A long but pleasant day of hiking.

*Accommodation: Camping*

*Elevation: + 570m/-1470m*

*Walking: 7 to 8 hours*

📍 Day 15 **Chhepka - Juphal (2440 m).**

Today's gentle walk follows the river, it is sometimes hilly. We cross a timeless village whose inhabitants appear to have jumped straight out of a wonderful fairytale. We climb up to the beautiful village of Juphal where the terraces are connected by ladders carved in rough trunks.

*Accommodation: Camping*

*Elevation: +400/-700 m*

*Walking: 6 hours*

📍 Day 16 **Flights: Juphal - Nepal - Kathmandu**

Domestic flight to Nepalgang then onward flight to Kathmandu.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Meals not included*

📍 Day 17 **Kathmandu**

Free day in Kathmandu. Option to fly over Mt. Everest, possibility to visit Bodnath, Pashupatinath ... Today is also a security day to account for imponderables like climatic hazards.

*Accommodation: Hotel*

*Meals not included*

📍 Day 18 **End of stay**

End of stay

The details in this programme are updated regularly but imponderables and unpredictable circumstances may result in inaccuracies. In order to provide the adventure which is best suited to your demands, the weather and the operational conditions, changes to the programme may be made. For safety reasons, we reserve the rights to interrupt your participation in this programme at any time if your technical level or fitness are deemed unsuitable or if you are seen as a danger to yourself or to those around you. This will in no case give rise to refunds or compensation.

## DATES & PRICES

### **International departures:**

*No departure for now*

**Trip code: NEPDOL-EN**

### **Included**

- All in-country transfers as detailed in itinerary
- 3 \* hotel and B&B accommodation in Kathmandu (Hotel Tibet, Manaslu or similar)
- Hotel accommodation in Nepalganj
- Trek includes full-board in lodgement in tents
- Domestic flights Kathmandu-Nepalganj-Juphal-Nepalganj-Kathmandu
- An English-speaking Altaï Guide
- Luggage transfers: up to 12kg maximum per person during the trek
- Trekking support team: assistants and porters
- Trekking permits: Dolpo Special Permit
- Staff Insurance

### **Not included**

- Entrance to historical sites & monuments
- Meals in Kathmandu & Kathmandu Valley
- A Nepalese visa: US \$ 30
- International flights
- Insurance: Repatriation, Medical & Helicopter Services
- Drinks, tips and personal expenses - all that is not 'included'

### **Notes**

*For many years, we put our know-how and our experience of Himalayan destinations to the service of travelers from different horizons. You may find yourself in an international group with participants from our various partners.*

### **Level 5/5**

This trips demands a very good physical condition, suitable clothing and good hiking boots. Regular and serious training (running, swimming, brisk walking...) during the 2 to 3 months prior to your trip is recommended. This trek includes an average of 5 to 6 hours of hiking per day and daily elevations of +/- 1000m.

### **Terms and conditions**

#### **Booking conditions**

Booking a trip with Altaï Nepal implies acceptance of the terms and conditions of sale. Each customer is required to complete a registration form and, subject to availability at the time of registration, travellers are expected to pay a deposit of 35% of the total price to complete their booking. Payments can be made online or by bank transfer. You will receive an e-mail with your booking confirmation.

#### **Invoice procedure**

Once your booking is confirmed you will receive an invoice by e-mail. The full balance of the trip must be received at least 35 days before your departure date. Altaï Nepal reserve the right to cancel your booking, free of charge, if this deadline is not respected.

#### **Cancellation policy**

If for any reason you have to cancel your trip, Altaï Nepal require written confirmation of your decision. The money you have paid will then be refunded according to the following deductions:

- Cancellation received more than 30 days prior to the departure date: a sum of €50 per person will be retained
- Cancellation received 30 to 21 days before the departure date: your deposit, 30% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received 20 to 14 days before the departure date: 50% of the total trip price will be retained

- Cancellation received 13 to 7 days before the departure date: 75% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received less than 7 days before the departure date: 100% of the total trip price will be retained

#### **Special cases:**

Please note that, regardless of the date of cancellation or modification if you have agreed to pay for services such as hotel reservations, flights or additional activities, these services are usually non-refundable so additional fees may apply.

- Fixed airfares: if your airline ticket was issued in advance, often done to avoid significant surcharges, you will be charged 100% of any non-refundable fees if you wish to change or cancel your flight plan.
- Fixed in-country costs: early charges for firm bookings will be charged if you cancel or modify your trip.
- Insurance costs: if you have taken out comprehensive or cancellation insurance, the cost of insurance is due and cannot be refunded.

**Please note that fees apply according to the date Altaï Nepal receive your cancellation or modification request in writing.**

If we have to cancel a departure due to an insufficient number of participants, you will be informed no later than 21 days before departure and a full refund will be issued, you will not be entitled to further compensation. We reserve the rights to cancel departures due to exceptional circumstances which may impact the safety of participants. Such circumstances include those amounting to 'force majeure' in which case participants will receive a full refund but they will not be entitled to any compensation.

#### ***Changes to travel contract***

If you wish to make a change to your booking please contact us in writing; you will be expected to pay any fee which might arise from this change. In the event of unforeseen external events, Altaï Nepal may change some aspects of the travel contract. If any changes are necessary you will be informed as quickly as possible.

#### ***Pricing***

The prices on our website are updated regularly and all of the prices we advertise are accurate when published. Altaï Nepal reserve the rights to make changes to any of these prices. Before you make a booking we will give you the up-to-date price of your chosen holiday including any supplements, upgrades or additional activities you may have requested. If the number of travellers is fewer than the indicated number of participants on the website, a small group surcharge may be applied. For all of our trips we include details of services, prices and what is/is not included but please be aware that changes to the prices may be necessary in accordance with exchange rates or price changes of various components of the journey.

#### ***Contract transfer***

If you are unable to travel with Altaï Nepal for any reason, you can transfer your booking to another person in which case our modification conditions apply. Both the transferor and transferee will be jointly and severally liable for payment of the total holiday price and other associated expenses. Some airline carriers treat name changes as cancellations and you may be required to pay for the cost of a new ticket.

#### ***Insurance***

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We strongly recommend that you take out personal travel insurance for your trip with Altaï Nepal as soon as your booking is confirmed. We advise you to purchase a travel insurance policy which covers flight cancellations, luggage loss and emergency health care. Please look carefully at which activities are covered by your insurer and do not forget to bring all necessary documents and information with you (name of the company, name of the contract, insurance policy number, telephone number...)

## PRACTICAL INFO

### Staff

Armed with an abundance of experience and a wealth of knowledge, our professional guides are all real experts. This trip is led by a professional Nepali English-speaking Tour Leader, who is part of the Altai Nepal Team. During the trek, they will be assisted by junior guides, sirdar and porters.

### Food

#### Lodge meals

The international success of treks in the Annapurna and Everest regions influences the economy; tariffs for food and lodging are now set by the National Park and have increased sharply in recent years, but quantities and quality of food have paradoxically decreased. To offset this decline in quality and quantity of food and in order to focus on the local economy, we plan Dal Bhat daily for our menus. It is a balanced dish, full of energy and nutritive intake, not fatty and above all, very digestible (digestion is more difficult at altitude). For all challenging treks, we provide energy snacks (like dried fruits). Meals in Kathmandu and in the valley are not included in the trip price. You will have plenty of time to discover Indian, Bhutanese, Chinese, Thai and other cuisines. Please be aware that tap water is not normally drinkable. All drinks are at your own expense.

### Accommodation

In Kathmandu and other cities, you will normally be accommodated in 3 \* hotels. In more rural areas, we use homestay accommodation with varying comforts (they all have functioning beds, mattresses, tables, chairs, toilets, etc.) We love using homestay accommodation options which offer insights into Nepalese life and support local families. In addition, the use of lodges considerably reduces the number of porters and cut down the infrastructure of trekking.

### Transportation

Transport/transfer by bus, private minibus & plane.

### Budget & exchange

**The local currency is the Nepalese Rupee NPR.**

Visit <http://www.xe.com> for the latest currency converter and exchange rates.

You can withdraw Nepalese Rupees from in-country ATMs in Kathmandu and credit cards are accepted except in shops and hotels. Please budget for meals in Kathmandu, drinks, tips and other personal expenses.

### Tips

Tipping is very present in Nepal. It is an integral part of the 'tourism' culture of the country: independent of salary levels, your tip is seen as a sign of appreciation. The amount depends on your satisfaction with the services rendered and your generosity. Your guide will help you on this subject. Like money, if you have clothes to give, do not hesitate to seek advice from your guide who will make a fair distribution. We ask that you do not to give sweets and / or energy bars / chocolate to local children as there are virtually no dentists here in the mountains. The same rules apply to medicine, western medication is not necessarily adapted for the Nepalese and, moreover, following the correct dosage is extremely important.

### Vital equipment

- Warm Sleeping Bag
- Water purifiers (micropur, aguatabs ...)

#### From head to toe:

- A cap or sunhat
- 1 or 2 sets of thermals: long-sleeved thermal tops and full-length long johns
- Long sleeved and short sleeved t-shirts, preferably in quick-drying technical material
- A light fleece or equivalent (plus extra warm layers if necessary)
- A breathable wind proof, waterproof jacket (Gore-Tex...)
- Lightweight waterproof over trousers
- Suitable shorts
- Walking trousers

- A pair of high-rise walking boots - strength, good grip of the foot and ankle (high stems) and impermeability are essential. Choose shoes with non-slip soles (vibram).
- A pair of trainers/sandels or equivalent casual shoes for cities, villages and evenings
- Thick walking socks
- Warm gloves, hat and scarf (it can be chilly in the mountains)

## Material

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- Your personal toiletries and a fast drying towel
- Water bottle(s). Min. 2 litres, light and isothermal
- A good pair of sunglasses (think min. category 3)
- Sun-cream, face and lips
- Head torch and spare batteries
- A pocket knife
- A pair of hiking poles
- A waterproof bag cover (or plastic bags) to protect your belongings
- Toilet paper
- Anti-bacterial hand gel
- Your camera
- A notebook or travel journal

## Helpful equipment

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- Walking sticks
- Waterproof bags to protect your belongings
- Notebook or travel diary

## Luggage

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Your luggage must be divided into two bags:

- A rucksack (35-40L or 45-50L) for use as a day bag. This will contain your (vital) personal belongings for the day (sweater, spare t-shirt, water bottle, picnic-lunch, sunglasses, small things ... )
- We use porters to transport our other belongings when trekking. Please bring a flexible travel bag with zips for easy access max 80L and max 13kg (16kg with camping gear). Please do not bring suitcases or other hard bags which the porters cannot transport.
- You may also be able to store some belongings securely at the hotel in Kathmandu.

To protect your bags, we will provide solid waterproof Altaï Bags.

## Medicine

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Your guide is a trained first-aider and will carry a full first aid kit at all times during the trip. We recommend that you bring a small personal first aid kit containing any medication you may need such as inhalers, plasters, antiseptic and painkillers.

## Passport

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Your passport should be valid for at least six months after the last day of your stay. It is your responsibility to confirm your specific passport requirements and please be aware that proof of onwards travel may be required.

## Visa

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It is your responsibility to confirm your specific visa requirements. Please bring valid passport photos with you to obtain a visa upon arrival.

To obtain trekking permits, your passport and photo ID is also required. Please provide us with good quality scans of your passport and 2 photos of identity.

For an individual visa, obtained on the spot as you arrive in Kathmandu, rates are as follows:

- 15 days : 25 US\$ + 1 picture
- 30 days : 40 US\$ + 1 picture
- 90 days : 100 US\$ + 1 picture

## Mandatory vaccines

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No mandatory vaccinations are required. Recommended vaccines include Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Rabies, Japanese Encephalitis, and Influenza.

## Health information & recommendations

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It is your responsibility to check that your personal health insurance covers everything in this trip. A consultation with your doctor is a prerequisite for any trip and we advise you to visit your dentist too as untreated cavities have an annoying habit of waking up with altitude.

### Hygiene Recommendations

Water is not drinkable in Nepal. It is always possible to buy bottled water but in order to limit pollution and preserve natural areas, we strongly recommend that you drink purified water. For that, think to bring a water bottle of minimum 1.5 liters and purifying tablets (micropur, agua tabs ...). Consume only treated water or water which has been boiled for 30 minutes and then filtered. Be sure to wash your hands frequently, and definitely before each meal (anti-bacterial hand gel is recommended) and take care to disinfect any skin wounds. Avoid drinking natural drinks like pressed fruit juice and do not consume ice cream or "lassi" (a milk-based beverage) bought in the street. Meat and fish / shellfish should be well cooked before consumption.

## Weather

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From the eternal snows of high peaks to the tropical lowlands, Nepal has a wide variety of climates.

- **In autumn** (October to mid-December) the days are very beautiful but can be fresh at altitude. At 3000 m altitude, temperatures can drop to -10 ° C (14°F) at night.

- **In winter** (mid-december to mid-february): The nights are generally cold and the climate is dry. If night time temperatures drop easily below 0 ° C (31°F) to 3000 m, the days are often sunny. Treks below 4000 m are very pleasant. There are very few tourists at this time.

- **In spring** (March to end of May): in this season, Kathmandu is in full bloom and the rhododendrons are magnificent. The weather is pleasant, it is getting hotter with some night storms. Temperatures vary between 10 and 28 ° C (50 - 83°F), but can rise to over +30 ° C (+86°F). Between 2000 and 3000 m, temperatures rarely drop below 0 ° C (32°F). A few rare frosts or snowfalls are possible in March from +4000 m.

- **In summer**: it is the monsoon season. This interrupts the majority of trekking from June until the end of September. However, certain regions of the "Trans-Himalayan" zone, Mustang and Dolpo remain sheltered from the monsoons - these are the only circuits available in Nepal in the summer.

## Electricity

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In recent years, due to a lack of hydropower facilities, electricity and water outages are becoming more frequent in Nepal, especially in Kathmandu (mainly in winter and spring). The hotels have generator but the electricity is limited. It is the same for the consumption of water.

## Local time

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Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)/ Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) +5.45. Daylight Saving Time (DST) is not observed here.

## Sustainable tourism

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As adventure and wilderness travel experts who run trips to some of the most remote parts of the world, we take responsible tourism very seriously. We respect the 'Leave No Trace' outdoor ethical code and try to explore this beautiful location whilst causing minimal environmental damage.

Since the beginning, we have advocated for responsible tourism and the importance of equitable and sustainable principles. Harmonising these fundamentals ensures a fair distribution of economic benefits, improved working conditions for local teams and an increased awareness of the importance and practice of environmental protection. We hope that all of our clients will respect our philosophies and embrace these attitudes.

The Leave No Trace policy can be summarized in 7 simple steps which we hope you will follow during our trip...

1. Be prepared
2. Stick to trails and camp overnight right

3. Stash your trash and pick up waste
4. Leave it as you find it
5. Be careful with fire
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

Over the years we have built up good relations with our local suppliers and we are keen to support local businesses as much as possible. We are a small company and we pay our local partners and suppliers directly insuring fair rates.

Our small group sizes not only provide a more intimate adventure but also cause less impact on the environment and local communities. We expect all who travel with us to support and uphold our Sustainable Tourism philosophies.