

Shey Gompa and Inner Dolpo

Trip Code: DOL

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



CHALLENGING



HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek to remote Shey Gompa and the Crystal Mountain
- Hike the spectacular path above the stunning Phoksumdo Lake
- Travel in the footsteps of 'The Snow Leopard' author, Peter Matthiessen
- Trek to Saldang Village home to Tibetan salt traders
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday

AT A GLANCE

- 20 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5375 metres
- Join at Kathmandu

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This real adventure trekking holiday visits Inner Dolpo, one of the least accessible and yet most alluring corners of Nepal. Few travellers have penetrated to the heart of Dolpo, a region beautifully portrayed in Eric Valli's excellent film - 'Himalaya'. This is very much the land that time forgot, with a mix of ancient Tibetan religions and a hardy people who make their living through farming and through trade with both Tibet and Nepal.

The spiritual heart of Inner Dolpo is the 'Crystal Mountain' and the 11th century Shey Gumpa at its base. The region was visited in 1973 by Peter Matthiessen accompanying George Schaller, during his study of the rare Himalayan blue sheep and the even rarer snow leopard. Matthiessen's subsequent book detailing both his trek and his personal spiritual journey has become a classic of its genre. Flying to Dolpo's only airstrip at Juphal, our holiday adventure begins with a trek north to the lush green fields of Ringmo and the stunning blue Phoksumdo Lake. After a day acclimatising in this beautiful spot we continue across the Kang La to Inner Dolpo and Shey Gumpa. Our return route crosses the Shey La to the major Dolpo settlement of Saldang and then the Jeng La to reach Dho Tarap. We round off this special trekking holiday with a descent of the impressive Tarap Gorge to Tarakot and from there return to Juphal. For the connoisseur of Himalayan trekking and for anyone who wishes to visit an unspoilt region of near mythical status, this trek is an absolute must.

Is this holiday for you?

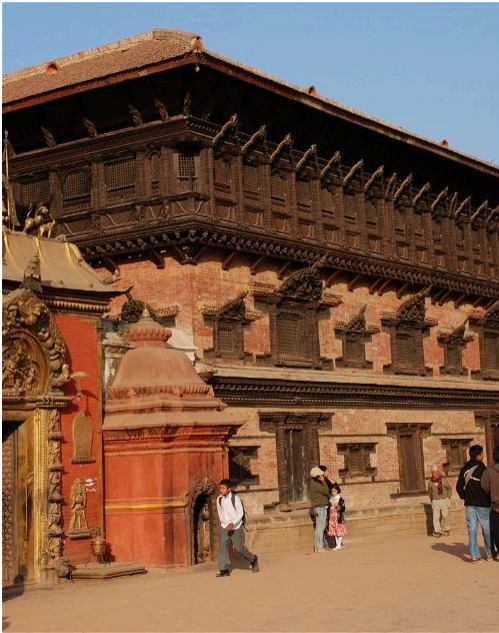
This trekking holiday into the restricted Inner Dolpo offers a variety of trekking conditions from maintained trails well trodden by local people to less regularly used routes over shale and scree. With a combination of a number of longish trekking days, several high pass crossings, and the negotiation of the steep gorges of the upper Phoksumdo and Tarap valleys, this holiday is tougher than the Annapurna Circuit and we have placed it at the highest level of our blue grade. A good level of fitness is needed for this trip and a head for heights is also required as there is a degree of exposure on some of the paths. Ideally, this should not be your first experience of trekking above 4000 metres. Since there are no lodges of a good standard in this region, this is a camping trek with a full Nepalese crew. Please note that this is camping in some style, where we provide spacious 2 person tents and thick foam mattresses to ensure you get a really good night's sleep. Also part of the camp set up is a dining tent (complete with table and chairs) where you will eat your meals and relax. The cook and his team have the use of a kitchen tent and there will also be one (or more usually two) toilet tents. Your local crew will set up the camp each evening and take it down again in the morning.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Kathmandu Tour - Nagarkot and Bhaktapur

The Kathmandu Valley contains the cities of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu itself, all of which were once independent kingdoms. An exploration of the valley's historic and cultural sights is an excellent way to begin or end your adventure in Nepal. Highlights of this tour includes a very early drive up to Nagarkot on the Kathmandu Valley rim, the perfect place to watch a Himalayan sunrise. This is followed by a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bhaktapur, renowned for its temples and traditional buildings.

1 day from
US\$175 per person



Chitwan Jungle Extension

The jungles of southern Nepal are an interesting counterpoint to trekking in the foothills or the high Himalaya. Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides a relaxing and comfortable base for a wildlife safari and cultural village experience. During two days of wildlife viewing in the Chitwan National Park 'buffer zone' - the interface area between visitors and the animals that live at Chitwan - you will be accompanied by expert guides on safaris by jeep by boat and on foot.

3 days from
US\$1,545 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified Nepalese tour leader
- Kathmandu Airport transfers
- Internal flights and land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described in the trip dossier
- All meals
- Restricted area permits
- Full trekking service including all equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- Guided sightseeing tour of Kathmandu
- FREE Sleeping bag and down jacket hire is available for this holiday on request

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Nepalese Visa
- Tips for porters and other trek staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Kathmandu.

Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 26

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Our camping holidays in Nepal are accompanied by an experienced and well trained trek cook and his team of assistants. Breakfasts will include porridge or cereals and sometimes eggs, with tea, coffee and hot chocolate. Lunches are generally prepared on the trail and can include cooked or tinned vegetables, rice, chips, freshly made Tibetan bread, as well as tinned tuna, meats or cheese. On occasion this can be augmented by noodle soup. Dinners always start off with soup, followed by a locally inspired main course such as rice, dal and spicy vegetables, or a more international dish like pasta with a tomato sauce or pizza and chips. Dessert can be tinned fruit with custard or rice pudding or cake with custard. The emphasis is on providing a high-carbohydrate and largely vegetarian diet, which we have found to be easily digestible at high altitude. During this trek there will be very few opportunities to purchase snacks and drinks from simple shops and tea houses. All meals while on trek and also while staying in hotels in Kathmandu and in Nepalgunj are included in the trip price.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 3 nights in Kathmandu at an excellent and centrally-located hotel such as the Shanker. There is also a single night at a comfortable hotel in Nepalgunj. Whilst on trek there are 21 nights full-service camping. This is camping in some style, where we provide spacious 2 person tents (foam mattresses are also provided), a dining tent complete with table and chairs where you will eat your meals and relax, a kitchen tent in which the cook crew produce your meals and one (or more usually two) toilet tents. Your local crew will set up the camp each evening and take it down again in the morning. You will be served with a cup of 'bed-tea' each morning and provided with a bowl of water with which to wash. Water for hand washing is also provided at each meal. On arrival into camp each afternoon hot drinks and snacks will be provided in the dining tent. All accommodation is arranged on a twin sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. It is possible to hire a single tent while on trek for an additional cost. Please note single tent hire does not include single rooms in hotels. For the 4 hotel nights single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. Additional hotel nights in Kathmandu can also be pre-booked.

Internal flights

Access to the high and remote areas of the Himalaya where our treks start is often only possible using internal flights. The changeable nature of mountain weather makes flying conditions complex. In addition, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal does not operate to the same standards as those of western nations and all airlines in Nepal appear on the UK Air Safety List (ASL), and are banned from operating commercial air services to, from, and within the United Kingdom. Flying in Nepal is an acknowledged risk, and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice provides further details which you can read on their [website](#). KE is mindful of its duty of care to clients travelling with us in Nepal and we are stakeholders in an annual independent air audit of Nepal airlines undertaken by UK tour operators, most recently undertaken in February 2024. KE uses 5 airlines in Nepal which have been approved by this audit. These airlines are: Buddha Air, Summit Airlines, Shree, Tara and Yeti. We continue to cooperate with other tour operators to monitor aviation safety in Nepal and will ensure we remain a stakeholder in any further air safety audits. While we have taken appropriate action to try to minimise the risks of flying in Nepal, you should be aware that flying in mountainous terrain is not without any risk.

Please note that poor weather can cause delays on internal flights. If at the start of your holiday internal flights are cancelled for the day, you will spend an extra night near the airport (this may be at a hotel other than the group hotel). On the majority of trips there is enough flexibility in the trekking itinerary to make up 1 or possibly 2 lost days, but an alternative trek will be provided if delays to internal flights mean the original itinerary (or a shortened version of it) is no longer feasible.

For trips that end with an internal flight out of the mountains with no alternative road access, we have included 2 nights in Kathmandu as a contingency against delay. In the extremely unlikely event that a delay to your internal flight causes you to miss your homeward international flight, KE will re-book international flights for Flight Inclusive clients, but please be aware that clients booking on a Land Only basis will be responsible for re-booking their onward travel and for any associated costs. We advise you to take out suitable travel insurance and to keep your receipts, as you may subsequently be able to make a claim.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified Nepalese tour leader, assisted by an experienced team including Sherpa guides and porters.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude on our website which can be viewed via the link below. Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

www.keadventure.com/page/altitude.html

Park Fees & Permits

The region known as Inner Dolpo is classified as a 'restricted area'. To limit the number of visitors to this sensitive region and to help preserve the unique culture of the Dolpa, a quite significant charge is made for access to this area. Unlike many trekking companies, KE include this permit fee in the overall holiday price, so there are no hidden surprises or hefty costs once you arrive in Nepal.

Spending Money

Approximately £200 to £250 (or equivalent in US dollars, Euros etc.) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including porter and trek crew tips, beer, soft drinks etc. It is not necessary to obtain local currency prior to departure. Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are equally acceptable for exchange in Nepal. Please note: Scottish and Northern Ireland bank notes are not accepted in Nepal. We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of cash, since you will exchange the majority of this on the day of your arrival in Kathmandu. If you prefer not to carry all of your spending money in cash, it is possible to withdraw money from ATMs in Kathmandu using your debit or credit card. During the trek it will rarely be possible to buy snacks, chocolate, soft drinks and beer from tea-shops. Please be aware that since everything has to be carried up, these items become more expensive as you gain altitude.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service. Normally the tips are given at the end of the trek and this is best done as a group. Your Nepali tour leader will advise the group on an appropriate level of tipping. Most groups will hand out the tips with a bit of ceremony (or sometimes a party) on the last evening, to mark the end of the holiday. As a guide, we recommend that each group member contributes around £100 (in rupees) to these tips. At the end of their trek many people also like to donate various items of equipment to the porters and trek staff who work so hard to make the trip a success. Boots, gloves, hats, scarves and even socks are always warmly received by the porters, whilst technical clothing and equipment such as head-torches and trekking poles is highly prized by the Sherpa team. Your tour leader will make arrangements for a fair distribution (possibly by raffle) amongst the trek crew. Please note that you will have the opportunity to tip your tour leader separately (and additionally) during dinner on the final evening of the holiday.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

Your main item of luggage should be a sturdy kit bag, duffle bag or similar. This will be carried during the trek by porters or pack animals and must weigh no more than 15kg. If you are picking up a sleeping bag and down jacket from KE in Kathmandu, you need to factor in the weight of these items (around 3kg) and allow space in your bag for them. You should also take on your holiday a daypack of approximately 30 litres capacity. For all flights to and from STOL airstrips in Nepal the maximum allowance for hold baggage AND hand baggage combined is 15kg and you should make every effort to keep to this total weight. It is usually not a problem to check in a couple of kg more than this, but you may be required to pay a small excess luggage charge. It is possible to leave items not required on trek at the hotel in Kathmandu. For your international flights, please check the baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Visa Nepal

All nationalities require a visa. The visa process is partly automated and the fee is \$30 for 15 days, \$50 for 30 days, \$125 for 90 days. The visa is FREE for children under 10 years. The visa allows multiple re-entry. Payment must be made in cash and USD, GBP or Euros are accepted.

Part of this on-arrival visa process involves filling in a 'Tourist Visa Application Form' and you can simplify the procedure at Kathmandu Airport by filling this form in online (**within 15 days of travelling**) at [this link](#). This generates a receipt which you present (hard copy or saved on your phone) on arrival. This should allow you to go straight to the cashier to pay for your visa and has the potential to save you time in the visa queue.

Whilst these are not now needed for the visa process, we recommend that you travel with at least 2 spare passport photographs.

Trekking Permits - what do we need from you ?

Mount Everest Marathon (MEM). Everest Monasteries Trek (EVP). Ganesh Himal Panorama Trek (GHP). Lamjung Himal Trek (LHT). Middle Hills Arun River to Dudh Kosi (MHT). Shey Gumpa and Inner Dolpo (DOL). Dolpo to Mugu Trek (DTM). Around Manaslu Trek (MAN).

For each of these holidays, we need your passport details and we need to send through to Nepal ahead of your departure a scan of the information pages of your passport and a scan of a passport-style photograph of yourself. Please send these scans to us once your holiday is guaranteed.

In addition, for Conservation Area treks and other treks requiring Special Permits - DOL, DTM, MAN - you will be required on arrival in Kathmandu to provide your passport (with your visa) for presentation at the Nepal Tourism Board. Your passport will be returned to you by your tour leader at dinner.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. For this trip you need to be aerobically fit and also comfortable with walking up to 7 hours each day with ascents and/or descents of up to 1000 metres on most days. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Regular hiking in hill country is the best training but running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina. Before departure, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

Climate

Mid October to mid November is the best season for visiting Dolpo, between the end of the monsoon and the colder and potentially snowy onset of winter. During this trip we are likely to encounter a wide range of daytime temperatures. At the start of the trek, at low level, it is likely to be warm during the day, possibly above 20 degrees centigrade. Higher up, it will be cooler. Above 4000 metres the maximum daytime temperature will be just 10 or 12 degrees centigrade, although it can feel warmer than that in the sun. When the sun goes down, the temperatures fall rapidly and the night-time temperatures at our highest camps will be well below freezing. This region, north of the main chain of the Himalaya, usually sees little in the way of precipitation at this season, but it should be remembered that in mountains, localised storms do occur and the possibility of rain or snow can not be ruled out.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Trekking and Climbing in Nepal. Steve Razzetti.
- Lonely Planet Nepal.
- Rough Guides Caravans of the Himalaya. Eric Valli.
- The Snow Leopard. Peter Matthiessen

Maps

Upper Dolpo 1:125,000. Nepa Maps

A good map covering the entire route. The scale is quite small compared to maps we might be used to for mountain walking in Europe or the United States, but larger scale maps are hard to come by and this one has enough detail, clearly presented, to be useful to the trekker.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. The packed weight of your kit bag while trekking should be no more than 15 kgs.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Sandals or similar for river crossings
- Gaiters
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Travel clothes
- Baselayer shirts
- Baselayer leggings
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Warm and waterproof gloves or mittens
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep your kit bag contents dry)
- Daypack approximately 30 litres

- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -10°C)*
- Warm jacket (down)*
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).
- Small padlock (to lock your kit bag)

The following items are optional:

- **Thermarest or similar camping mat
- Trainers or similar for camp use
- Shorts
- Sleeping bag liner
- Swimwear
- Trekking poles (strongly recommended)
- Camera
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

*FREE sleeping bag and down jacket hire is included in your KE holiday booking on request.

Please make all requests at least 4 weeks prior to the trip departure date. Please note all hire / rental equipment is issued in Kathmandu. Please remember to allow room in your kit bag for these items.

**Foam mattresses are provided. Taking an additional Thermarest or similar mattress is optional.

The Nepalese are still traditional and conservative in the way they dress. Therefore to avoid embarrassment on both sides we recommend that you respect this and do not wear revealing clothing or sleeveless tops while visiting Nepal. Shorts are acceptable, but they should reach to just above the knee and be modest and for women it is preferable to wear trousers or a trekking skirt.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Kathmandu. Transfers are provided from/to Kathmandu Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kathmandu. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving mid-afternoon on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Kathmandu usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

We have been running treks into Nepal's wild west for 25 years and Dolpo remains one of our favourite places. For a classic Nepalese trekking adventure, into an amazing part of the country that sees very few trekkers, this one is hard to beat.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 03/07/2024 and the trip is subject to change