

TIBET AWAY FROM  
TIBET  
UPPER MUSTANG



## TIBET AWAY FROM TIBET

It's time to head out on a very special journey. On a journey to a magical Kingdom few have ever seen. To a high altitude plateau, home to a pure form of Buddhism, not diluted by Western influence over the years, where the "Tiji Festival" lights up this deeply spiritual land while you trek through this untouched wilderness.

Read on to discover Upper Mustang...



## INTRODUCTION

We have created this cultural explosion of a trip in the restricted area of Upper Mustang, allowing you to experience the Nepal Himalaya in a way few have ever done. Over approximately two weeks you will explore the ancient kingdom of Mustang along the Tibetan border. You will trek through starkly beautiful foothills, great red fluted cliffs, and villages, which appear like, green oases in the distance.

Upper Mustang, also known as Lo Manthang. It is located on the border of Nepal and Tibet and is the entire district from the Kali Gandaki river south to Ghasa on the Annapurna Circuit. The region is the last pillar of undiluted Tibetan culture within Nepal, and has the ad-

vantage of not being mired in political restrictions currently in place across the border in China.

You will have the additional honour of travelling in time to coincide with the annual Tiji Festival. This is a three-day ritual known as the “Chasing of the Demons” and the whole event reenacts the story of a deity named Dorje Jono who fights his demon father to save the Kingdom from a brutal water shortage. Mustang is known for its arid nature, and water is the most precious commodity in this barren, yet beautiful, land. Throughout the festival you will see Buddhist monks acting out various sacred dances and rituals, in full costume. Very few people will have ever seen what you are about to witness.



# THE ITINERARY



### **Day One - Arrive in Kathmandu:**

Fly to Kathmandu (we can advise on the various airlines offering flights). Transfer to your hotel in Kathmandu and spend the afternoon sightseeing.

### **Day Two - Travel to Pokhara:**

You will head to Pokhara by internal flight. You'll get to Pokhara mid-afternoon where you'll have the chance to explore Nepal's second city.

### **Day Three - Travel to Jomsom (25 mins flight), trek to Kagbeni (2,800m, 3 hours):**

You will start your day with a short and very scenic flight to Jomsom. From here your journey will begin, trekking to Kagbeni. It's roughly a 2-hour trek from Jomsom to get here, where we'll stop for the day. We'll prepare for the excitement of tomorrow, when we enter the restricted, and previously forbidden, kingdom of Mustang. (Please note alternative transport arrangements in case of bad weather – explained at end of detailed itinerary)

### **Day Four - Trek to Chele (3,050m, 7 hours):**

The trail today involves a fair amount of climbing to start with but rewards you when you arrive to the village of Tangbe (3060m). In Tangbe, you will get your first sight of the black, white and red chortens (stone Buddhist monuments) that symbolize upper Mustang.



One hour beyond Tangbe, you arrive at the second village of Chhuksang (2980m) at the joining of the Narshing Khola and Kali Gandaki rivers. Your first day of trekking ends in the village of Chele, which boasts several lodges and teashops along with a few campsites.

**Day Five - Trek to Geling (3,500m, 6 hours):**

From here you will be trekking through high altitude country, climbing in and out of the huge valleys made by the Kali Gandaki. Today's trek starts with a climb up a steep spur to a cairn and a spectacular view of Ghyakar. From here the climb continues up a steep canyon to another cairn, then a gradual descent to the village of Samar (3620m). Once past Samar, you will hike on and through Bheni (3860m), Yamdo (3920m) and Shyangmochen (3800m). From here you trek on to the picturesque village of Geling (3570m) and stop for the day so you may enjoy the views of the surrounding countryside and visit the large red gompa (Tibetan Buddhist temple), which overlooks the valley.

**Day Six - Trek to Ghemi (3,645m, 6 hours):**

Today is an exciting day! From Geling your trek starts with a gentle climb through the center of the valley, this leads to a tough climb across the head of the valley to the Nyi La Pass (4020m), the southern boundary of Lo. As you continue on you will get a break as you gently descend for roughly an hour before dropping steeply into the village of Ghemi (3510m), the third largest village in Mustang.



### **Day Seven - Trek to Tsarang (3,550m, 6 hours):**

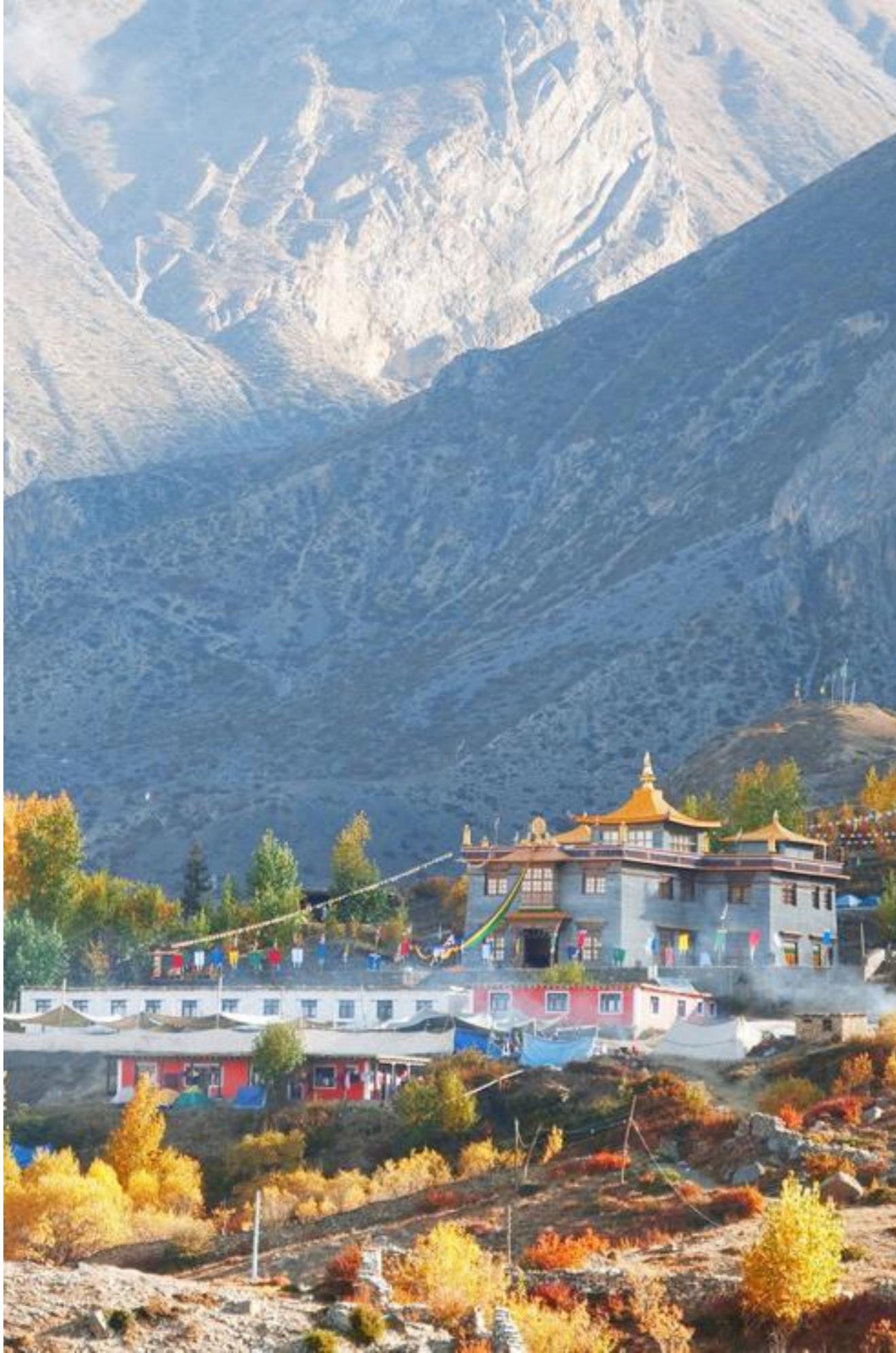
The trail out of Ghemi brings many spectacular views along the way to the town of Tsarang (3575m), the second largest town in the kingdom and the formal capital. After setting up camp you can explore the huge five story dzong (fortified palace) and striped gumpa which loom on the eastern end of Tsarang and its maze of houses, fields and willow trees separated by stone walls.

### **Day Eight - Trek to Lo Manthang (3,800m, 6 hours):**

As you pick up the trail out of Tsarang, you get to enjoy a fairly easy day of through the valleys before reaching the border to Lo Manthang. From here you will travel through a desert-like landscape painted in every hue of grey and yellow you can imagine before arriving just in time for the start of the Tiji Festival.

### **Day Nine & Ten - Tiji Festival:**

the next two days are yours to witness and enjoy the incredible Tiji Festival, that celebrates the myth of the “Chasing of the Demons”. The story and events of the myth are re-enacted through the next 2 days and you will see many Buddhist displays that you will not witness anywhere else on Earth.



### **Day Eleven - Trek to Drakmar (3,810m, 7 hours):**

Today begins the trek back to Kagbeni, the trail out climbs steadily to a cairn on a pass at 4000m, which offers you one last glimpse of Lo Manthang. As you continue to climb to the head of the valley you cross the Chogo La (4325m), the highest point on the trek. Along your trek back you pass many Buddhist monuments and temples, most significantly Ghar Gompa. The gompa is affiliated with the Nyingma lineage, one of the oldest in Mustang and contains hundreds of painted carved stones in wooden frames displayed in the main chapel. Once past Ghar Gompa, you hike to Drakmar (3810m) where you will rest for the day.

### **Day Twelve - Trek to Shyangmochen (3,475m, 6 hours):**

Upon leaving Drakmar, your hike brings you back Ghemi and onto the initial trail taken and finally ending the day in Shyangmochen to rest.

### **Day Thirteen - Trek to Chhuksang (3050m, 6 hours):**

Your trek takes you back through the villages of Yamdo, Bheni, Samar and Chele and ends in Chhuksang.

### **Day Fourteen - Trek to Jomsom (2,700m, 7 hours):**

Your final trekking day will take you from Chhuksang back to Kagbeni where you will exit the restricted areas and head back to Jomsom. You'll spend the night here.



### **Day Fifteen - Pokhara then on to Kathmandu:**

The day will begin with a morning flight to Pokhara, followed by a flight to Kathmandu to arrive in the evening. (Please note alternative transport arrangements in case of bad weather – explained at end of detailed itinerary). It is possible to fly back home from Kathmandu today if we are not delayed by weather until now. Please purchase open return flight tickets so that you can change your flight if you decide to fly home today.

### **Day Sixteen - Kathmandu sightseeing:**

Today is yours to explore the capital, check out one of the many World Heritage sites or to catch up on some gift shopping for loved ones. We'll ensure you get to the airport in time for your flights today.

### **Days Seventeen/Eighteen - Contingency days:**

These are two additional days required should we need to drive from Pokhara to Jomsom on day 3, and the same again from Jomsom to Pokhara on day 14. If the weather is bad and we cannot fly then driving will add a day for each of these journeys, requiring an addition of 2 days to the itinerary. The price of the trip will not be affected. We suggest that you book international flights with flexible return date changes.

# WHAT TO EXPECT





**Food** - Food will be prepared in the teahouses and will be international in nature. Pastas, potatoes, meat and vegetables. Breakfasts will include eggs in different ways, cereals, teas and coffees. The food and drinks will be clean and well prepared, giving us all the energy we'll need for our trip.

**Accommodation** - In Kathmandu we'll be in a well-run, clean hotel, with en-suite bathrooms, in-room TVs, 24 hour hot water and power and laundry facilities. Rooms will be on a twin-share basis. In the mountains we will be staying in tea houses (think family owned lodges that have been upgraded for international trekkers) on a twin share basis.

**Gear** - We will provide all participants with a full kit list that is provided at the end of this document. This is a highly recommended list of important items that will make your journey with us comfortable, as well as safe. Please refer to the list for full details.

**Trekking Assistance** - we will be accompanied by a full compliment of porters who will be helping us with our excess luggage. Trekking days will see us carrying our day packs, with water, food and water-proofs in them.



## INCLUSIONS

- All the necessary trekking permits
- Accommodations in Kathmandu
- All domestic transportation
- All meals and accommodation during the trek
- Full-qualified guide
- Porters to carry group personal equipment during the trek

## EXCLUSIONS

- International flights to and from Kathmandu
- Meals in Kathmandu (allow USD 10-15 per meal)
- Carbonated and alcoholic drinks
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, etc.
- Tips
- Travel and medical Insurance (covering rescues)
- Rescue and early departure from the trek
- Personal gear

# PRICE AND OPTIONAL EXTRAS





Price - The price for the whole adventure discussed so far comes to:

**9,495 AED per person on a twin sharing basis. Please contact us for single supplement charges.**

Please contact us at [info@mountainquests.com](mailto:info@mountainquests.com) or at

+971 4 368 2687 / +971 50 644 9130 for more information, or to book.

[www.mountainquests.com](http://www.mountainquests.com)



# MOUNTAIN QUESTS

## ABOUT MOUNTAIN QUESTS

Based on the philosophy of 'Live, Don't Exist', Mountain Quests was set up in April, 2011 by Matt Farr whose passion for mountain climbing led him to Nepal on a regular basis to conquer the majestic peaks of the Himalayas. After years of successfully putting his climbing skills to the test all over the world, including a two week adventure in the Alps climbing seven mountains in 12 days, Mountain Quests was born.

With offices in both Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and Kathmandu in Nepal, Mountain Quests is in full control of its operations, logistics, safety and security to offer clients options of both tailor-made trips and pre-arranged itineraries.

The essence of every trip is a culturally rich and diverse travel experience that will appeal to people seeking a unique adventure or looking to push physical and emotional boundaries.

The types of trip vary to accommodate different abilities and include hiking, trekking, expeditions, mountain biking as well as extreme pursuits including survival trips and adventure sports such as bungee jumping and paragliding. The core destination of Nepal make up the portfolio with the addition of Northern India planned towards the end of 2014.