



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

The Valley of Mustang



The Kaligandaki Valley near Kagbeni (Day 6)

DAY 1 – Depart UK.

DAY 2 – Arrival in Kathmandu.

On arrival in Kathmandu you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 3 – Kathmandu.

After a leisurely breakfast, you will meet your World Discovery guide and spend the morning visiting the highlights of Nepal's fascinating capital, located at 1,337m (4,390ft) in a valley beneath the towering peaks of the Himalayan range. Walk through the atmospheric medieval centre of this ancient city, visiting **Durbar Square** with its many temples and monuments, including the old Royal Palace, home to the famous 'Living Goddess'. Continue to the dramatic Buddhist stupa of **Swayambhunath**, located on a hilltop overlooking the city. In the afternoon visit **Patan**, the second city of the Kathmandu Valley, with its superb collection of ancient temples.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 4 – Fly to Pokhara.

In the morning fly to Pokhara, gateway to the Annapurna region. In the afternoon enjoy a tour of the city and a short boat ride on scenic Phewa Lake.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 5 – Fly to Jomsom to begin the trek.

Early morning flight to Jomsom. You will be received by your trekking team at the airport. After a short preparation, the trek starts. Three and half hours of walking direct north of Jomsom is the little pretty village of **Kagbeni**. You will cross a small hanging bridge just out of Jomsom and then walk northwards along the banks of the Kaligandaki River. The trail is barren with rocks and sand and is mostly flat, making it very easy, enjoyable as well as picturesque. You will have in sight of the imposing peaks of Dhaulagiri (8167m), Tukucho (6920m) and Nilgiri (6940m) and the entire Annapurna massif to the south and south west.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *3 to 4 hours walking.*

DAY 6 - Kagbeni to Cheley.

The 'Restricted Area' begins from this point. With your permit for upper Mustang, your Liaison Officer will complete formalities here. There is a trail up the east bank of the Kaligandaki that climbs over many ridges as it heads north. When Lo people (from Mustang) bring their horses to Kagbeni, they travel straight down the centre of the river valley, jumping on horseback to cross the river. The village of **Tangbe** is situated alongside the east bank trail above the river at an elevation of 2930m. Nilgiri peak, which dominated the southern skyline at Kagbeni, continues to loom massively at the foot of the valley. **Chhuksang** village is about 1 and a half hours beyond Tangbe; this is the area where the **Gurung** peoples live. The trek now leaves the Kaligandaki Valley and climbs steeply up a rocky gully to **Cheley** at 3030m. The culture changes from Gurung to the Tibetan culture of the Lo. Houses have sheep horns above their doorways and you will see many twigs in the shape of a cross with threads in 5 colours woven in a diamond-shaped pattern. These are called zor and are supposed to capture evil spirits that threaten the population.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *5 to 6 hours walking.*

DAY 7 – Continue to Geling.

The climb from Cheley is up a steep spur to a cairn at 3130m. The climb continues - a long steep, treeless, waterless slog, along the side of the spectacular steep canyon to a pass and cairn of rocks at 3540m. Here the trail makes a long gradual descent to some Buddhist chortens on a ridge, then descends further on a pleasant trail to **Samar**, situated in a grove of popular trees at 3290m. This is a major stopping place for horse caravans. The Annapurna range, still dominated by Nilgiri, is visible far to the south. Climb above Samar to a ridge, then descend into a large gorge past a chorten painted in red, black, yellow and white - all pigments made from local rocks. The trail goes into another valley filled with juniper trees, crosses a stream and climbs up to a ridge at 3800m. and a cave with self-emanating statues of Guru Ringpoche and Padmasambhava. Snellgrove translates the cave's Tibetan name as "self produced place of Promenade". It is believed that if any part of statue is broken off it will grow back by itself. From the cave, it is possible to climb a steep gorge to **Shyangmochen** and avoid backtracking to Samar. The trail climbs gently from Shyangmochen to a pass at 3770m and enters another huge east-west valley. Geling, today's destination, sits at 3774m.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *5 to 6 hours walking.*

DAY 8 - Geling to Charang.

From Geling, the trail climbs gently through fields up the centre of the valley, passing below the settlement of Tema Gung and a chorten. It becomes an unrelenting climb across the head of the valley to the **Nyi La Pass** at 3950m, the highest point reached on the trek. About half an hour from the pass is the trail junction; the left trail leads to Ghami, while the Charang Trail descends below blue-grey and red cliffs across the valley to a steel bridge across the **Tangmar Chu River**, and then climbs past what is perhaps the most spectacular stretch of mani wall in Nepal (a mani wall incorporates prayer-stones inscribed with the Tibetan Buddhist chant *Om mani padme hum*). Climbing over another pass at 3600m, the route makes a long and gentle descent to Charang at 3520m.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *5 to 6 hours walking.*

DAY 9 - Charang to Lo-Manthang (Mustang Town).

The trail descends about 100m from Charang, crosses the Charang Chu River and climbs steeply up a rocky trail to a cairn on a ridge opposite the village at 3580m, then enters the **Thong Valley**. A short descent leads onto the 'Plain of Aspiration' at 3780m. Cross a stream, then climb up onto the plateau of Lo-Manthang itself, crossing an irrigation canal at the south wall of the city.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *3 to 4 hours walking.*

DAYS 10 AND 11 - Break from the Trek in Mustang.

Two days to rest your legs and explore the area in and around Lo-Manthang (Mustang Town). Until recently Mustang was off limits to tourism but is now accepting a small number of intrepid explorers prepared to walk there along the trails (the only way to get there). In and around Lo-Manthang are a number of Buddhist sites, including **Champa Langhang**, dating back to 1420, the red-coloured **Thugchen Gompa**, and the **Gompa of Namgyal**.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner each day.

DAY 12 - Lo-Manthang to Ghami.

A long walking route today as you begin the return journey. There is an opportunity to vary this return route, visiting two villages that you did not see on the trek northwards. From Lo-Manthang the trail to Charang heads south, to reach **Gekar**. Turn east along an indistinct trail that passes the irrigated fields of the city. The trail climbs steadily to a pass marked by a cairn, offering a last glimpse of Lo-Manthang. After descending to the valley floor, the route heads to the right up the centre of the valley to its head. Cross a ridge and traverse across the heads of two indistinct passes. Climb to a ridge, then across a valley to a cairn and a pass 200m above Gekar. The route crosses some alpine meadows to a crest, then drops down an eroded gully to the upper part of the village of **Tahmar** ('Red Crag'). Most of the surrounding hills are pastel shades of grey and yellow. The trail descends alongside the stone walls and fields of the extensive village, then climbs to a ridge. It is then a short descent to **Ghami** at 3440m.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *6 to 7 hours walking.*

DAY 13 - Ghami to Samar.

From Ghami follow the direct route to Nyi la, climbing to a ridge and then contouring upwards to meet the trail from Charang. Continue to the pass and descend steeply into the Geling Valley. Follow the trail that passes Geling to an isolated tea house and then descends gently to the three houses of **Tama Gung**. A steep set of switchbacks leads to a stream, then the trail climbs to a huge painted chorten. The trail rejoins the Geling trail near the ridge, just below the Chorten, and the remainder of the day is along already-travelled trails back to Samar.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *5 to 6 hours walking.*

DAY 14 - Samar to Kagbeni.

Retrace the upward trail back to the Kaligandaki River and downstream to Kagbeni.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *6 to 7 hours walking.*

DAY 15 - Kagbeni to Jomsom.

From Kagbeni walk further south along the Kaligandaki Valley to reach Jomsom.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner. *3 to 4 hours walking.*

DAY 16 - Return to Kathmandu.

Fly back via Pokhara to Kathmandu. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 17 - Kathmandu. Special 6-course Nepali Dinner.

A final day at leisure. In the evening you will be taken (unless you are already staying there) to the unique **Dwarika's Kathmandu Hotel** for a special farewell Nepali dinner.

Meals included: Full breakfast, dinner.

DAY 18 – Depart for home.

Private transfer to the airport for your international flight home.

Meals included: Full breakfast.